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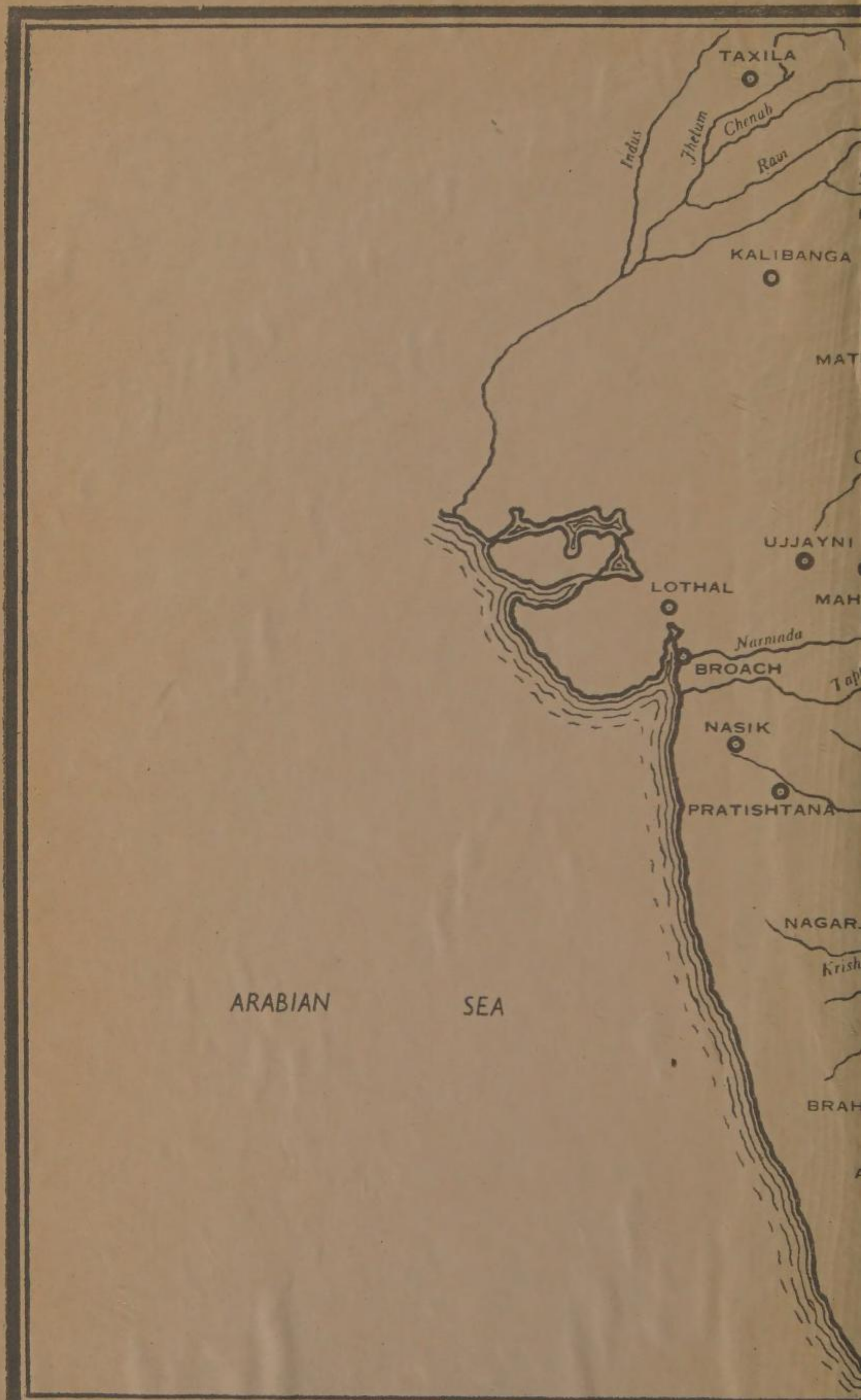
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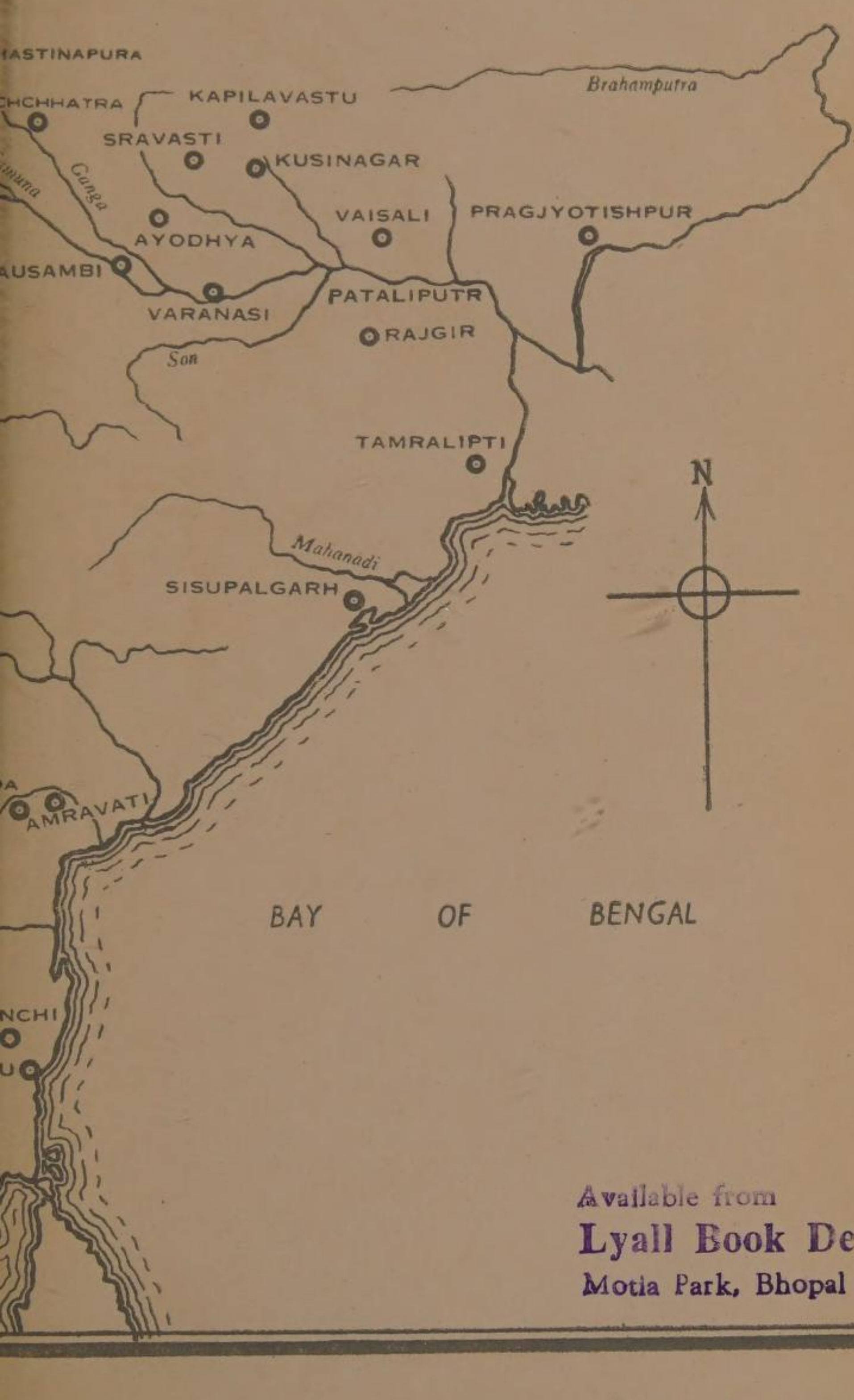

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CITIES
OF
ANCIENT INDIA

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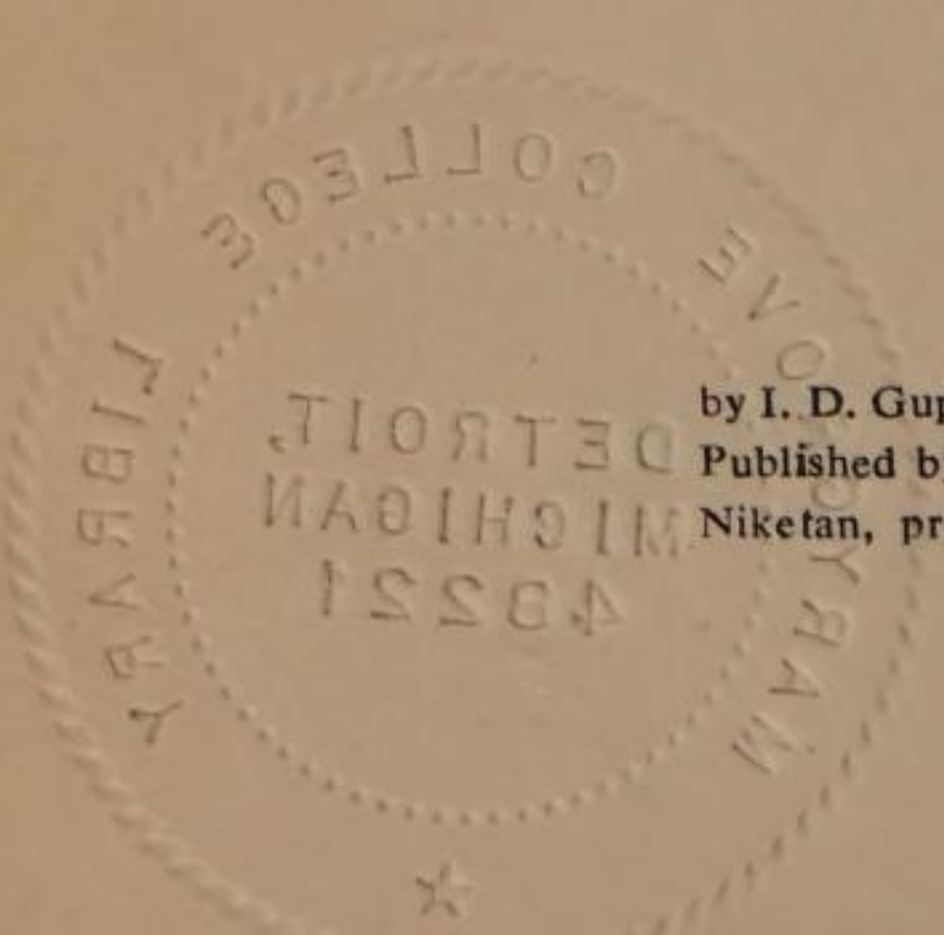
First published 1966

PRINTED IN INDIA
by I. D. Gupta at Prakash Printing Press, Meerut and Published by Chandra Prakash for Manohar Sahitya Niketan, proprietors, Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut.



PREFACE

Cities of Ancient India presents a picture—historical and archaeological—of sites of political and religious importance. For the last hundred years, archaeologists have strived hard to locate, excavate and reveal the buried past. Extensive material from literature and the accounts left by the Chinese pilgrims corroborate in general the findings from excavations and archaeological remains. These help in presenting a balanced account of the once flourishing cities of ancient India. Metropolis, commercial marts, and cities situated on the national highways, or near the confluence of navigable rivers with the seas, are all included in this brief study. The importance of Southern Indian Cities—connected as these were with the North, and some serving as ports of embarkation—is also assessed.

The present study is expected to meet the requirements of those interested in ancient Indian geography, while the general reader would find enough information regarding India's past.

Thanks are due to the Archaeological Department of the Government of India for the material drawn from its annual publications—*Archaeological Reports, Ancient India, Indian Archaeology—A Review*, and *Archaeological remains and monuments* Parts I and II. Measurements from English to Metrics are not converted. These are retained in their originals.

My esteemed pupil, and now colleague, Prof. Sarva Daman Singh has obliged me by going through some proofs and offering me suggestions.

Finally, I am grateful to the authorities of the National Academy of Administration for according me permission to write this book for publication.

LUCKNOW,
March 1, 1966.

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Ahichchhatra

AHI-CHU-TA-LO or Ahichchhatra, near the village of Ramnagar in the Bareilly district, represents the capital of the northern division of Panchala, which figured prominently during the period of the Mahabharata and was one of the sixteen Janapadas in the time of the Buddha. The Panchaladesa, as a whole, comprised of Bareilly, Badaun, Farrukhabad, and the adjoining districts of Rohilkhand and the central Doab in the Uttar Pradesh. According to the *Mahabharata*, this great kingdom extended from the Himalaya mountain to the Chambal river. The people of this country are frequently mentioned in the later Vedic Samhitas and the Brahmanas. The learned Brahmins of this place also took part in philosophical discussions. The capital of the northern Panchala was Ahichchhatra, while that of the southern one was Kampilya or Kampila. According to the great Epic, once again, the division was consequent to the defeat of king Drupada by his friend Drona. This division continued for centuries. The Bhagirathi river formed the dividing line between the two. The Vedic texts, however, refer to the eastern and western divisions of this country, while Patanjali in his *Mahabhashya* mentions the northern and eastern divisions.

The political independence of the country did not survive against the Nandas and the Mauryas. It bore the brunt of the Indo-Greek invasion under Demetrius. The Sunga rule seems to have extended over this region, although a uniform set of coins of Panchala rulers

numbering about fourteen or more have been found in the region forming part of Panchala. It is presumed by some scholars that these could be identified with the Sunga rulers—a suggestion which seems unwarranted with the increasing number of Panchala rulers whose coins have been found. They had also relations with the local houses of Kausambi and Mathura. The Pabbosa inscriptions mention Saunakayana as the ruler of Ahichchhatra. Ptolemy called the city Adisadra. The Kushanas followed by the Guptas ruled over the country of Panchala. Achyuta, a contemporary of Samudragupta, was defeated by the latter and his kingdom was assimilated in his growing empire. The importance of the city, once a metropolis, seems to have faded in the period following, although it was a town of considerable proportions when Hiuen-tsang visited it in the seventh century A.D. The capital was 17 or 18 *li* in circuit while the country was more than 3000 *li* in circuit. The people here were honest and diligent in learning. There were more than ten Buddhist monasteries and nine Deva temples, with about 1000 monks and 300 worshippers of Ishwara Deva (Siva) respectively, who smeared their bodies with ashes. There were also four small stupas built on the spots associated with previous Buddhas. As a Jain centre, the city known as Samkhyavati was visited by Parsvanatha who was protected by the Nagaraja of the place from the inimical Kanathasura. The later phase of the history of this city is unimportant. When the Muslim rule extended over it, the ancient fort seems to have been restored by the Muhammadan Chiefs. Captain Hodgson visited the site before Cunningham, and he found the ruins of an ancient fortress extending several miles in circumference with about three dozen bastions or less. The towers were

generally 28 to 30 feet in height, the highest most in the southwest side being 47 feet. This extension and repair was done according to the local tradition not more than 200 years back. The site was left out, except for a superficial dig of a mound supposed to conceal a stupa built by Asoka. Extensive excavations were, however, carried on during 1940–44 yielding valuable pottery, which was classified for the first time, and terracotta pieces of exquisite beauty and detail.

The site revealed nine strata ranging from about 300 B.C. to circa 1100 A.D. In the earliest period no structural remains could be traced, while in the next one covering the period from 300–200 B.C. mud-brick structures associated with North-Black polished pottery were found which continued in the next period as well. Burnt-brick structures were traced in the succeeding levels and in Period IV of the first century B.C. a defensive brick wall fortifying the city was found over two earlier earthen ramparts. Numerous Panchala coins were recovered from this and the succeeding period to the end of the first century A.D. The Kushana occupation of the site is revealed by their coins found in Period VI ranging from c. 100 to 350 A.D., for about four centuries. Ahichchhatra was a Brahmin stronghold with large-sized images of divinities of baked clay found in the Period VII along with coins of Achyu—identified with Achyuta who was defeated by Samudragupta. Traces of poor building in the last two periods dating from c. 750–850 and 850–1100 A.D. with coins of Adivaraha and Vigraha, suggest the last phase of occupation. Two large terraced temples were uncovered in the fortified area originating from the Gupta times and continuing till the end of the city in the twelfth century A.D., when the

capital was transferred to Vadamayita—modern Badaun.

The terracotta figurines recovered from excavations at Ahichchhatra include those of Mother Goddess, a female figure related to her, Mithuna figures, Dwarfs, the Brahmanical deities Vishnu, Suryas and several other gods and goddesses, a plaque depicting Durga killing the Buffalo-demon, Buddhist images and cult images like those of multi-headed figures and numerous smaller ones. A few foreign types are also found. It would be out of place to describe any of these terracottas.

Ahichchhatra, as the ancient capital of Uttara Panchala, thus, seems to have had an eventful past. Situated to the east of the Kuru country, Uttara Panchala and its capital seem to have changed hands more than once—some time forming part of the Kuru and at another time included in Kampillaratha or Kampilya-rashtra—*viz.*, the southern Panchala with Kampilya as its capital, identified with modern Kampil on the Ganges between Badaun and Farrukhabad. This place is mentioned in Vedic and Pali literature, beautiful as the abode of Indra according to the *Ramayana*. Mentioned by Panini, and in the *Mahabharata* as the place of Draupadi's Svayamvara, it was a sacred place for the Jains as well, being associated with the thirteenth Jain Tirthankara-Vimalahatha. Even now there are a couple of Jain temples here. The two cities of Kampilya and Ahichchhatra, respectively the capitals of the two parts, had all the glory of ancient cities in a big country like that of the Panchalas, which according to the *Mahabharata* extended from the Himalaya mountains to the Chambal river.

Arikamedu

THREE kilometres from Pondicherry, the site of Arikamedu, supposed to be identical with Poduke of the *Periplus* and Ptolemy, famous along with Kamara and Sopatma as a port which merchants from Limrike and the north frequently visited, has now been unearthed as an important centre of trade and commerce with the western world. Stray finds of certain beads and gems of Roman make, followed by digging by the French in 1937, finally culminated in systematic excavations in 1945 which brought out the importance of this ancient port. Tamil literature, especially the epic *Silappadikaram*—'the lay of the Anklet' has something to say about the city of Puhar or Kaverippattinam, about 96 kilometres south of Pondicherry, and the references might have a wider meaning, particularly the incoming of the traders from the west, and the chartering of their services for other purposes. The sight of the abode of the Yavanas—men from the Graeco-Roman world in prosperous and affluent circumstances—and sailors from distant lands, was not an unusual phenomenon. The beautiful ships of the Yavana traders brought cool and fragrant wines and gold, and returned with pepper. The strong Yavanas were also employed as wardens in the service of the State and for technical posts. The accounts suggest a colony of these foreigners in the principal ports and the State capital at Madura. The excavations at Arikamedu seem to confirm the information from the Tamil literature.

The chronology of the site is determined by the pottery

which consisted of Arretine ware from Italy and amphorae from Italy or elsewhere in the Mediterranean. Arretine ware was found during the period of occupation, and even after the stoppage of its importation from the source. It is proposed that the Arretine imports belong to the last phase of the industry, and A.D. 20–50 may be a liberal estimate covered by them. Below the lowest Arretine ware producing stratum were 6 feet of sandy deposits containing relics, the lowest yielding sherds of Mediterranean amphorae. These two types of Roman wares occurred throughout the entire span of occupation from the close of the first century B.C. to A.D. 200. The two-handled amphorae were meant to contain wine or oils, and the smooth-surfaced wide dish with concentric bands of rouletted pattern—known as Rouletted ware—was for other utilitarian purposes. The pattern and technique of the Rouletted ware were definitely importations, though the specimens found might not necessarily have been of foreign origin. The imported objects found in excavation included Graeco-Roman gems, some with intaglio, a red-ware Roman lamp, and Roman glass-bowls sometimes 'pillared' in mould. The earliest local ware at Arikamedu, predominantly grey with some proportion of red ware, is completely red in the later stage. This gets cruder later on. In the pre-Arretine layers some of the pots have basket impressions, graffito-decoration, or incised designs of the simplest kind. The black-and-red ware, usually associated with megaliths, was also found in limited quantities.

A large warehouse built in about A.D. 50 was exposed in the northern sector at Arikamedu, while in the south, four levels of successive structures were found which included a courtyard with two small tanks, both believed

to have been used in the preparation of muslin which was exported from India. The great warehouse vanished before A.D. 200. A pit full of pot-sherds of the first to second centuries A.D. was cut into the remains of one of its walls. No coins were found in the ancient levels of the site. This site seems to have been occupied during the first two centuries A.D. and was despoiled for its bricks in course of time.

The importance of Arikamedu, thus, seems to be confined only to the trade contacts, as evinced from the finds of Roman pottery and the reference to it in Tamil literature. It was one of the three principal markets for the merchants of Limrike—the Tamil land; and it was also frequented by foreign merchants. The warehouse, largely destroyed by brick robbers and curtailed by the river, was a structure more than 150 feet long. It is oblong in shape, massively built with a thick plaster outside to protect it from water on this low-lying site. Evidence tends to suggest that it was a Roman settlement in India, having contacts with the outside world. There is no evidence of Arikamedu being an ancient city, except for its probable identification with Poduke.

Amaravati

AMARAVATI, situated about 32 kilometres northwest of Guntur in the Sattenapalli Taluk of this district, is famous for its stupa with exquisite carved sculptures, and as the seat of a temple to Siva known as Amaresvara. With Dharani-kotta, it shared importance as the metropolis of the Andhra rulers. Its old name is Dhanya ghata or Dhanya-ghataka, identical with Dhanyakata or Dhanyakataka meaning the 'corn-town'. According to a Buddhist work *Dhammapada Atthakatha*, Buddha in one of his previous births was born here as a Brahmin youth named Sumedha. The Andhrabhritya kings who were Buddhists set up the famous stupa of which some of the railings and sculptures now decorate the entrance hall in the British Museum. From the legendary point of view Amravati and the Siva temple named Amaresvara figure in the *Skanda Purana*. The temple's importance is due to its location on the river Krishna, the idol, and the sanctity of the place. Dhana-kataka or Dhenukataka also figures in a few inscriptions from the cave temples in Western India. Four inscriptions from Karle record gifts of the perfumer Simhadatta, the carpenter Svamin, Yavana Sihadhaya (Simhadhvaja) and Dhamma Yavana respectively. A dated record from Kanehri, however, fixes the antiquity of the place—Dhenu-kataka, Dhanakataka or Dharakataka in A.D. 108. It is rather strange that Dhanakataka does not find a place in Ptolemy's *Geography*, nor is it mentioned in the *Periplus*. Instead, a people named Arvarni or Avarni, occupying the country below the Maisolus or Godavari river, with the

capital called Malanga and the ruler named Bassaronaga, are mentioned by Ptolemy. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-tsang was struck with the beauty and magnificence of the religious edifices of Dhanakataka. The pilgrim describes the province of Dhanakataka as 6000 li or 1000 miles in circuit. The Muslim historian Rihan refers to this place as Danaka. According to Orissan Chronicles, Amravati was founded by, or established as a seat by Suryadeva of Orissa in the twelfth century A.D.

It, therefore, appears that Amaravati—once known as the seat of the Andhras, was also known as Dhanakataka or Dharnikotta and the place had its religious importance both for the Buddhists as well as the Saivites. Both left traces of their hold. The famous Amaravati Stupa, similar to the great one at Sanchi, had a diameter of nearly one hundred and sixty feet and an over-all height of about ninety to a hundred feet. The railing and casing slabs were added to the original stupa at the time of Nagarjuna —the Mahayanist sage and philosopher. Casing slabs from the great stupa now in the Madras Museum suggest some unusual features in the stupa, namely offsets or platforms located at the four cardinal points and surmounted by fine pillars with Buddhist representations. The figures of the Buddha carved in relief suggest its Mahayanist character. The Yogic posture in which he is seated, with the daughters of Mara attempting to disturb and distract him, reminds one of the famous temptation scene so common in the Buddhist art. The grand stupa no longer stands on the site. The beautiful limestone carvings were burnt for lime by the local people. The little that is left is now in the British Museum or in the gallery of the Madras Museum. These include decorative fragments, the lotus medallions of the cross-bars, Jataka stories, and

scenes from the life of the Buddha, procession of the Yakshas, besides a few free-standing Buddha images. The archaeological department has set up a local museum to house the antiquities from the site which has something to tell about Buddhism in the Krishna Valley, and the life of the people depicted in the carved sculptures. The history of the city that was at one time the metropolis of the Andhras is connected with the phase of Mahayana Buddhism.

Amaravati, famous mostly for its Buddhist art, has special significance for Hinduism. The lofty temple of Amaresvara standing on the banks of the Krishna, surrounded on all the four sides by the towering gopurams or gateways, seems to have been built in the twelfth century A.D., or even a little later, since there is no inscription earlier than the eleventh century A.D. recorded on stone here. The famous *linga* installed in the temple, about 15 feet high, is supposed to confer merit on the worshipper and the place is considered as holy as Kashi in the north. Amaresvara is worshipped with his consort Bala Chamundika. There are also many minor deities inside the temple. A large number of inscriptions are recorded on the walls of this temple.

Amaravati, the abode of the Amaras or immortal Devas according to the legendary accounts, is also associated with the perpetual war between the Devas and the Rakshasas —or gods and demons. Getting the boon from Siva, the gods came to reside here and from thence Dhanyakataka came to be known as Amaravati. The name seems to have some significance. It was no doubt the capital of the Andhras—a position it enjoyed till the fourth century A.D. During this period art and religion thrived under their patronage. Both Hinduism and Buddhism prospered, but

when the Chinese pilgrim came in the seventh century A.D., he found the monasteries desolate. Hinduism, however, prospered, and the famous Siva temple is a living monument of the triumph of Saivism even when the city had lost its political importance.

Ayodhya

THE ancient town of Ayodhya, also known as Saketa, once the capital of the Ikshvaku kings, and also of Prasenajita of Kosala, the birth-place of seven Jain preceptors, seems to have withstood the ravages of time. Connected with Rama of the epic fame, the city is described as full of wealth, with its spacious streets and roads, well watered and looking gay with flowers, and its lofty gates serving as bulwarks against aggression. Full of palatial buildings, green trees and mango groves, with a deep ditch running round it, Ayodhya symbolised an ideal city with a politico-social order based on righteousness. It is well described in the *Mahabharata* as a *punyalakshana*—endowed with auspicious and good signs. Devotion to duty was the key-note of this ancient city regarded as one of the seven holy places of the Hindus. Vinita was another name of the city, while Fa-hien calls it Sha-che and Ptolemy Sogeda. During the period of the Brahmanas it was a mere village, but it was a metropolis in the Epics. At the time of the Mahabharata war, Brihadvahu was the king of this place, killed by Abhimanyu. In the Buddha's time Saketa was the capital of Kosala. The two are identical, but Rhys Davids distinguished them. It is very likely that a new city might have been set up, as was New Rajgir in the time of Ajatasatru, a contemporary ruler of Magadha.

The history of Kosala, with its mighty rulers Prasenajit and his son Vidudabha who had extended their king-

dom to include Kasi in the east and the territory of the Sakyas in the north-east, pales into insignificance with the emergence of the Magadhan rulers as powerful antagonists. The Nandas, followed by the Mauryas, assimilated Kosala in their empire. Under the Sungas, too, it had a Viceroy ruling on their behalf here. An inscription found at Ayodhya mentions Pushyamitra performing two horse sacrifices during his reign. A large number of coins of three different types in the punch-marked series, followed by those bearing the names of rulers have been found here. The earlier series seem to belong roughly to the 4th century B.C., while the names of the rulers inscribed on the later series might be suggestive of their independent or semi-independent status during the period preceding the Sungas, till about the first century A.D. Under the Kushanas the city remained more or less in oblivion. It, however, figures along with Prayaga and the country of Magadha in the Puranas as forming part of the kingdom of the Guptas. According to the spurious Gaya plate, Ayodhya was the seat of a Gupta camp of Victory. It is likely that the successors of Skandagupta had a capital there till the rise of the Maukharis. The Chinese pilgrims visited this place. Fa-hien refers to the stupa signifying the spot associated with the Buddha when he came there, while Hiuen-tsang refers to its richness in vegetation, excellent climate, and good manners of the people. At that time there were more than a hundred Buddhist monasteries accomodating over three thousand monks representing both the schools. Asanga and Vasubandhu, the two noted Buddhist philosophers, stayed in Ayodhya for some time, and it was at the old monastery that the latter wrote his treatise. He died here at an advanced age of over eighty.

A large Buddhist monastery was near the tope of Asoka, while about four or five *li* or less than a mile to the west of it was a Buddha relic tope. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that Asoka is said to have set up about 84000 stupas over the relics of the Buddha, taken out from the original eight stupas set up immediately after his death by the rival claimants to the relics.

Mists gather over the history of this city. It was no doubt within the empire of the Pratiharas and Rathors of Kanauj. Local tradition states that for centuries, Ayodhya was a wilderness, a fact also referred to by the Muslim historians. The Slaves and the Khilji rulers held sway over it, and subsequently it had its importance as the headquarters of Oudh. It was under the charge of the Muslim governors appointed from Delhi. The province had not lost its importance under the subsequent Muslim dynasties, but with the emergence of Jaunpur as a strong kingdom it was completely over-shadowed. Ayodhya was a mint-town in the time of Akbar, but there is no reference to it in later chronicles. The Nawab Vazirs of Oudh had their capital at Fyzabad, four miles from here, till it was transferred to Lucknow. The subsequent history of the city under the British is not of any importance except for the small part which the mutineers played in the revolt of 1857.

Pre-eminently a city of temples—Hindu and a few Jain ones—it also engaged the attention of the Muslim rulers who set up mosques ; those of Babar and Aurangzeb being notable. It seems that members of different religions vied with each other, and people from distant parts of India set up their religious establishments. A Jain temple was set up by a Chalukya ruler of Gujarat. The Raja of Kulu reproduced the ancient Treta-ka-Thakur—the site

where Rama was supposed to have performed a great sacrifice and set up an image of himself and Sita—which was renovated by Ahalya Bai of Indore. Muslims also built mosques destroying Jain and Hindu temples. The ruins of the Buddhist stupas and mounds could be traced here and there. The famous Hanuman Garhi has been the scene of bitterness too, the situation taking an acute communal shape. Ayodhya, as it stands now on the same Sarayu river, still harps on its association with Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu, and draws to its bosom pilgrims and devotees from different parts of India. This small city forms only a part of Fyzabad, but it has its natural beauty and religious sanctity to offer to those who come here not as tourists but as devotees of Rama.

Broach

BHARUKACHCHHA, Bhrigukachchha, the Barygaza of the *Periplus* and Ptolemy, identified with modern Broach or Bharoch, at the mouth of Narmada, was from ancient times a rich and prosperous city, thickly populated. The name signifying sea-march or a high coast land enjoyed the position of a central mart for trade with the western world. In earlier Buddhist literature and in that of the Christian era, particularly the *Periplus* and Ptolemy's *Geography*, it was the seat of sea-faring merchants. Every commodity of local consumption was brought here from Ujjayini. Precious stones were imported here. As the greatest seat of commerce in western India, according to Ptolemy, ships full of merchandise sailed in different directions from this place. The Jatakas also relate tales connected with the merchants visiting this place from far off cities like Banaras. Some merchants sailed to Suvarna-dvipa also from here. Several stories from the Jatakas relate to master sailors who were patronised here for their skill in navigation. Its association with the sage Bhrigu is traced in the *Mahabharata*. In the jungle there, at that time in the possession of Ghatotkacha, the sage established his hermitage near the bank of the river. His pupils and followers settled down here, and henceforward it came to be known as Bhrigukachchha. The place is also asso-ciated with Bali of the traditional fame, the king who gave away everything to Vishnu disguised as a dwarf Brahmin. As a centre of pilgrimage, it is mentioned in an inscription from Junar recording the gift of a two-celled cave by the

brothers Budhamita and Budharakhita who came from Bharukachchha.

Ptolemy has given an account of Larike—the southern part of Gujarat between the lower Mahi and Tapti, with its capital Barygaza—the ancient Bhrigukachchha. The place is repeatedly mentioned in the *Periplus*. At the time when that work was written, it was the greatest seat of commerce in western India, and the capital of a powerful and flourishing State. The three famous harbours on the western coast—Surparaka (Sopara) near Salsette, Broach or Bhrigukachchha on the estuary of the Narmada, and Prabhasa in Saurashtra figure in ancient India as centres of trade with the west, and these are also noticed in literature. The *Milindapanha* or the Dialogues of Menander refers to the people of Bharukachccha as good architects who were commissioned along with others in the building of a city. The *Divyavadana*, a Buddhist work of about the third century A.D., records an interesting story in connection with the name Bharukachchha or Bhrigukachchha. Two ministers and a Buddhist from the land of Sovira in Sind went in search of a new land when their homeland was destroyed by a sand-storm. Bhiro, one of the two ministers named this place after him. This legend seems to be a much later innovation, since Bhrigukachchha was known to the ancient world much earlier than the time when this event was recorded. In Strabo's *Geography*, there is a reference to Zarmanochegas, an Indian from Bargosa (Barygaza) who had joined a delegation from an Indian prince Porus to Augustus Caesar, but immortalised himself by jumping into the fire and his tomb was set up at Athens.

This famous city, the capital of Larike or southern Gujarat, once in the possession of the Kshatrapas and the

Andhra rulers, finally passed to the Guptas. The place is mentioned in the *Brihatsamhita* and the *Yoginitantra*, the *Bhagavata* and the *Markandeya Puranas*. The last work locates it on the river Venva. It is also mentioned in a grant of the Gurjara king Jayabhatta of the Kalachuri year 486 – 734-5 A.D. A century earlier Hiuen-tsang also refers to it as Po-lo-ka-che-po comprising 2400 to 2500 *li*, or from 400 to 417 miles in circuit, and its chief city was on the bank of the Nai-mo-tho or Narmada river, and close to the sea. At that time there were more than ten Buddhist monasteries with 300 brethren who were adherents of the Mahayana school, and about ten Deva-temples. It was attacked by the Arabs who passed through this way in their push further south-west, before being defeated by Avanijanasraya Pulakesiraja. The later history of this place is connected with the Solankis of Anahilwada who annexed it, followed by the Muslim Governors from the thirteenth century onwards; and it was finally included in the British territory in India from 1803. The fortification of the city was the work of Siddha-raja Jaisimha, and later on of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat.

The geographical location of this ancient city has not changed despite the passage of time. It was an important seat of sea-faring merchants coming from far off places like Banaras or Varanasi in the north, and it had its contacts with the western world, where it exported heavy items like logs of ebony and lycion—a thorny plant, the juice of which was used for dyeing yellow as well as with some ingredient used as a medicine—besides many other items. It no longer enjoys that position of vantage and prominence as it did in the past. It has its importance as a district town. The archaeologists have not, however, uncovered anything of the ancient past.

Eran

LITERATURE is blank on the antiquity of Eran—ancient Airakina, noticed in the stone inscription of Samudra-gupta—a village on the left bank of the Bina, 11 miles to the west by north from Khurai in the same sub-division of the Sagar district in Madhya Pradesh. Well-known for its Gupta remains, consisting of temples and inscribed pillars, this ancient site surrounded by the Bina (ancient Venva) on three sides, was excavated recently. The three mounds of varying heights were exposed revealing four periods of occupation from the Chalcolithic age to about sixteenth-eighteenth centuries A.D. The earliest period is pre-historic with the equipment of the chalcolithic cultures of central India. Characterised by the presence of microliths and black-and-red, thick grey and black-on-red wares, the last being mostly of the Malwa fabric—a local variety, a few specimens of plain, thick grey ware were also found, while a solitary sherd of coarse grey with a thick white coating on the exterior is notable. Four sherds of thick grey ware were painted in a light-red pigment with linear patterns. Channel spouts occur late in this period of occupation. Roughly towards its end the settlement was enclosed by a wide mud-rampart and a moat outside it, except on the river side which offered natural protection to the city. Other finds included terracotta animal figurines, stone, steatite and terracotta beads, fragments of terracotta and shell bangles and a small piece of copper. Absence of structural remains except for a roughly circular fire-pit with slightly raised

burnt walls is a conspicuous feature of this period. On the basis of the similarity of the pottery with that from Navdatoli, the beginnings of proto-historic habitation are dated approximately from the seventeenth century B.C. although these are subject to corrections on the basis of the Carbon-14 determinations for Eran. The place seems to have been left by its inhabitants, till it was occupied again a few centuries before the beginning of the Christian era.

In the second period as well, no structures were actually encountered, while the use of iron was evinced by a few objects of this metal. Coarse red-ware was the usual pottery in use in this period although the plain black-and-red also continued. A sherd of the N.B.P. ware was also found in the upper levels of this period. Other important finds of the period include beads of terracotta shell, paste and semi-precious stones, a weight of jasper, fragments of shell bangles, objects of iron and stone, punch-marked and cast tribal copper coins and a circular lead-piece bearing the impression of a die, with the legend—*Rano Idagutasa*—of king Indrajit—in Mauryan Brahmi.

The third period of occupation covering the first four or five centuries of the Christian era is the most important one, characterised by the complete disappearance of the black-and-red ware and the emergence of the red-polished ware associated with Roman ceramics. Structural remains are encountered in the houses built substantially with kiln-burnt bricks. It yielded a large hoard of punch-marked coins and those of Ramagupta, a broken terracotta seal of some western Kshatrapa ruler, beads of terracotta, glass, shell and semi-precious stones, fragments of shell bangles, objects of stone, iron and

cones, and terracotta animal figurines. Those in Gupta style also occur in this period. An interesting seal bearing the figure of Gaja-Lakshmi, bears an inscription in Gupta characters mentioning the name of the city Airakina.

The last period was noted for the abundance of glass and lac bangles. In this period the area of occupation was restricted with a long stone wall providing fortification for the town. Glass and shell bangles appear to have been a popular industry in this last period of occupation, when copper coins of the local rulers of Bhopal and Gwalior were also found.

Airakina or Eran was definitely a city with a proto-historic past. Different periods of occupation ranging over hundreds of years separated one from the other. It is difficult to suggest the causes of desertion. These might have been due to natural factors, the location of the city being surrounded by rivers. Probably political factors with the consequent construction of the rampart and the ditch round the town might suggest the reason for desertion at some time or the other. Further excavations at the site on a horizontal basis might expose the extent of the city, while vertical excavations should account for the vicissitudes through which the city passed at the end of each period of occupation.

Hastinapura

THE capital of the Kurus and the Pandavas, Hastinapura, now in the Mawana Tehsil of the Meerut District in Uttara Pradesh, of Mahabharata fame, passed through vicissitudes of fortune more than twice when it was abandoned because of natural calamities. The city was named after Hastina, the Paurava who may have either founded it, or expanded the then existing city. Literary evidence—both Brahmanical and Jain—associates Hastina with it. The *Mahabharata* gives a detailed account of this city, its palaces and the hall where Yudhisthira lost in wager his kingdom and the kins to the Kurus. There are a few references to this place in the Buddhist literature describing it as a rich, prosperous and populous city which was visited by the Buddha. Its ancient and glorious character given in the *Divyavadana* is also corroborated by the Jain *Vividhatirthakalpa*. It associates the three Tirthamkaras—Santinatha, Kirthinatha and Adinatha with this city—being born here. Panini and the Greek Geographer Ptolemy also refer to it. Abul Fazal late in the sixteenth century calls it Hastnagar. The absence of any reference to it in the itineraries of the Chinese pilgrims might be due to its lesser importance in the history of Buddhism, but more so because the city was abandoned in the third century A.D. The *Puranas* forecast the tragedy falling on the city in the time of Nichakshu, when a great flood occurring in the Ganga carried away a considerable portion of it and the capital had to be shifted to Kausambi. Archaeological

evidence tends to corroborate the truth in the *Puranic* forecast. At the end of the second period of occupation, roughly about 800 B.C., a considerable portion of the settlement was washed away and the site was abandoned, but it was reoccupied. Traces of break in occupation at the end of the third period about the third century B.C. are noticed throughout the site with evidence of a large-scale conflagration. The site was finally deserted in the third century A.D. for a long time. The last period of occupation dates from the late eleventh to the early fifteenth centuries A.D. A fuller study of the archaeological material found in different periods of occupation might, in a way, give a history of the site and its people.

A series of mounds, at places rising to a height of nearly 60 feet, form roughly the ancient ruins of the city covering over half-a-mile from north to south and hardly a quarter from east to west. The gullies separating these must be the outcome of the monsoons. The main settlement might have been on the two blocks of mounds—the northern and the southern—the former known as Ulta-Khera. Excavations carried on in 1950-51 and finally closing in March 1952 have brought to light five distinct periods of occupation ranging from the period of the ochre-coloured ware people, preceding that of the Painted Grey Ware culture generally associated with the Aryans. No structures or antiquities were encountered in Period I, nor any implements, but the pottery pieces were ochre-coloured. The settlement in this period was rather sporadic and the people seem to have left it before it was occupied by the Painted Grey Ware people. Remains of mud or mud-brick walls were noted, but it is not certain if baked bricks were used. Few copper objects were found along with glass bangles. Terracotta objects asso-

ciated with this period include broken animal figures—disc, feeding cup, pendant and stamp. A few beads were also discovered. Skeletal remains of horse, unknown in the Harappan period, but mentioned in the Vedic literature, are suggestive of this culture being associated with the Aryans. The erosive scar on the mound about 6–7 feet above the occupational level of this period, and the recovery of ancient pottery 45–50 feet below the sub-soil water level are indications of the heavy flood carrying away objects and destroying a part of the city. The site was abandoned and there was no habitation for some time.

The third period of occupation covers the culture of the Northern Doab Grey Polished Ware and those using plain grey and red wares too. For constructing houses burnt bricks were now used on a fairly large scale, but mud-bricks and mud-clods were not given up. Details of house planning could hardly be expected in vertical excavations, stress being laid on the depth of cultures, rather than on the extent of any particular phase. Two burnt-brick drains—one sunk 3 feet deep and provided with a brick floor and lining—were exposed in this period. They were long enough to drain out the refuse water. Several ring-wells made of burnt clay with the rings varying served as soak-pits. Iron was used in this period and, besides animal figures, human ones were also found along with beads, bangles and rings displaying the fine workmanship of the people of this period. A large scale fire destroyed practically the whole of the city in this period with burnt walls and floors and charcoal remains of bamboos, reeds etc., seen throughout the mound.

The fourth occupation of the site after an interval of about a century is characterised by an exclusively red-ware pottery—wheel turned with stamped and incised

decoration. A ring-well belonging to this period was exposed while the art objects include the bust of a female figurine and the torso of Bodhisattva Maitreya. A wide distribution of terracottas in the Sunga style, including animal figurines, discs, reels, spindle-whorls, wheels, toy-carts, votive tanks—the first to appear at Hastinapura, about the middle of this period—are conspicuous. Personal ornaments—rings, beads, and a pair of talismans, beads, stone artefacts, lids and rotary quern and, above all, inscribed pots and coins were recovered from several levels in this period. Coins in the early levels include those of the Mathura rulers, assignable to the second century B.C., the Yaudheya coins round about the Christian era in the middle strata, and ten coins imitating those of the Kushana King Vasudeva found in the late level determine more or less, the date of this period of occupation. The city was abandoned, once again, towards the end of the third century A.D.

Considerable time elapsed before the last phase of occupation of the site began towards the end of the eleventh century A.D. The structures of this period seem to have been set up by removing bricks from the ruined walls of the earlier periods III and IV. Coarse and poor pottery including *handis* and knife-edged bowls, iron and copper objects, terracottas of poor workmanship are noticed in this period. Three stone images of this period made of soap-stone and sandstone include those of Parvati and the Jain Tirthankara Rishabhadeva in *Dhyanmudra* or attitude of contemplation. A coin of Balban was found from the middle level of this period. Jain temples existed even in the fourteenth century A.D., as noticed by Jinaprabhasuri of *Vividhatirthakalpa*.

The history of Hastinapura, despite its hoary antiquity,

is a chequered one. The site was deserted and occupied several times. In the struggle between nature and man, the former went on destroying the site through flood and fire, while the latter was engaged in facing the challenge and giving a good response, the triumph was ultimately that of man. Ancient cities built near the banks of mighty rivers had to face these dangers, but strategic and commercial considerations weighed heavily in reoccupying those sites which were abandoned. Hastinapur of the epic fame withstood this process of construction, destruction and resurrection. Excavations on a major scale might have something more to tell about the city's ancient past where literature is silent.

Kanyakubja–Kanauj

KANAUJ—the ancient Kanyakubja—also known as Gadhinagar, Kusasthala and Mahodaya, called the city of flowers by Hiuen-tsang, enjoyed the position of the metropolis of the three important dynasties—the Maukharis, the Gurjara-Pratiharas and the Gahadvalas in ancient India. It was given the name of Kanyakubja—the city of hunch-backed maidens—because of the curse of that great seer who wanted the hands of the hundred beautiful daughters of Brahmadatta, the king of that place. Getting a rejection of his proposal from all save the youngest one, he cursed them to be hunch-backed, and so was the city named. According to the Pauranic traditions, based on the epic ones, the city was associated with Visvamitra who relinquished the rulership of this place for a spiritual life. Fa-hien, the first Chinese pilgrim to India, gives an eye witness account of the city situated on the Ganges with two Sangharamas or Buddhist establishments for the members of the Hinayana sect. The Buddha had come here and gave a discourse on impermanency and sorrow, and a tower standing at that place even in Fa-hien's time was reminiscent of that event. The *Vinaya-Pitaka* associates the place with the visit of the venerable Revata from Sankissa. It is also mentioned in the *Bhagvati Purana* as a city of Ajamila. The political importance of the city grew with the Maukharis who made it their capital. The assassination of the ruler of this place Grahvarman who had married Harshavardhana's sister, without leaving any successor,

necessitated its incorporation in the kingdom of Harsha who ruled here on behalf of his sister. It was here that the religious assembly called by him in honour of the Chinese pilgrim was held, and the event could as well be described as a turning point in his career. Hiuen-tsang gives a vivid account of this place and its ruler. The kingdom was about 4,000 *li* in circuit. At that time there were about a thousand Buddhist establishments. He has also much to say about the people of this place and their benign ruler. The enlightened people dressed in silken attire with a refined taste and polished outlook, also applied themselves much to learning, and discussed in elegant language the most obstruse subjects. The Chinese pilgrim stayed there in Bhadravihara for a couple of months and studied under Viragasena.

The city of Kanauj continued to enjoy the attention and care of the important political powers in the early Medieval period. Lalitaditya Muktapida of Kashmir attacked it, and it subsequently became a bone of contention between the rival powers and influence of the Gurjara-Pratiharas, and the Palas helped by the Rashtrakutas. Nagabhatta of the Pratihara family finally became the ruler of this place, and this dynasty bestowed its affection and patronage on the place by making it the metropolis of its vast empire. The place is also noticed by the historians who have referred to Bhoja as Baura. In the later Pratihara period when the north-west India under the Shahi kings was engulfed in trouble, and Jayapala invoked the help of neighbouring kings, Kanauj responded with men and money. According to Ferishta, the king of Kanauj again answered the call of his compatriot when Mahmud invaded the territory of the Shahi kings. Kanauj itself was not spared. Utbi mentions the devas-

tation of this city in 1018. The dynasty lingered on, but the city lost its glory. On its dust was laid the foundation of the Gahadvala dynasty. This dynasty too showered its patronage on Kanauj, but the invasion of Mohammad Ghori in A.D. 1193 finally sealed its fate as the seat of the Hindu power in the Gangetic valley.

Kanauj's position as a centre of learning is only evident or inferred from the literary data. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of its being a university town like Nalanda or Vikramasila. Vandalism and destruction to the site have been so systematic and planned that there is hardly any ancient spot left for the historian or the archaeologist to give vent to his imagination in this direction. Bana, the court poet of Harsha, and Rajasekhara, who enjoyed the patronage of the Gurjara-Pratihara rulers of Kanauj, throw some light on the political and intellectual atmosphere of the city with its polished society, beautiful palaces, its Sangharamas and rising temples. The rulers encouraged learning by giving grants and recognising talent in academic gatherings. The patronage of the emperors and the literary atmosphere in the city drew eminent men of literature to this place. According to the Kashmirian poet Kalhana, Yasovarman was served here by Vakpatiraja, the illustrious Bhavabhuti; and other poets became panegyrists of Lalitaditya's virtue. Rajashekhara calls the reading of the poets from Panchala the best, because their tone was elegantly suited to different *Ritis* in poetry.

Kanauj or Kanyakubja, after the Pratiharas, has a sad story to tell. The dust raised by the razing of the Pratihara empire as a result of the Ghazni invasions took some time to settle down before the Gahadvalas could set up another kingdom. King Govinda Chandra

of the last Hindu dynasty probably helped in keeping up the literary traditions. He himself was proficient in different branches of learning. The city, however, lost its political importance. As a centre of learning, too, it ceased to be anything worth mentioning. The destruction of this ancient metropolis has been so complete, that the spade of the archaeologist has failed to uncover its past glory. The pen of the historian could only piece together bits of information scattered here and there to present a picture of its past.

Kanchipura

KANCHI, also known as Kachchippedu, the ancient capital of the Pallava rulers, a famous seat of learning, the place of pilgrimage—sacred to Vaishnavites and Saivites alike—is now represented by Conjeevaram in the Chingaleput district of Madras. As one of the most ancient towns of southern India, noted for its political and religious importance, this city figures prominently in Sanskrit literature, Tamil inscriptions, and even in the accounts of the foreign travellers. The earliest reference to this place is in the *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali. It is identified by some with Satiyaputta of Asokan Rock-Edicts, and in Pali literature it is noteworthy as the birth-place of the commentator Dhammapala, and perhaps also of Anuraddha, author of the '*Abhidhanmattha Sangaha*'. The *Brahmanda Purana* links Kanchi with Kasi, forming as the two eyes of Siva. It also figures in the *Skanda-Purana*, as well as in the *Yoginitantra*. The *Dasakumara-charitam* of Dandin refers to the city of Kanchi as the abode of the rich merchant's son Saktikumara. It is proposed by some scholars that Malanga, the royal city of Bassaronagos mentioned by Ptolemy, may be identified with Kanchi. The place is also mentioned in inscriptions, the earliest being that of Samudragupta at Allahabad. It refers to Vishnugopa of Kanchi who was defeated by his contemporary, but was restored back to his kingdom. The Aihole inscription of Pulakesin, the Chalukya ruler in the seventh century A.D., refers to his conquest of Kanchipura. It is mentioned as Kanchipedu in an inscription of Santi-

varman. When the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-tsang visited it, it was the capital of the province of Ta-lo-pi-cha or Dravida, and was 30 *li* or 5 miles in circuit. During the pilgrim's stay there about 300 Buddhist monks arrived there from Ceylon. There wese hundreds of Sangharamas and 10,000 Hinayana priests. The city was well-known for its architects who displayed their talents elsewhere as well. The great Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal dated about 740 A.D. was most likely built by workmen from Kanchipuram, since it is in direct imitation of the Kailashanatha temple where an inscription of Vikramaditya is also found. The Vaikuntha Perumal temple of Vishnu, and the Saiva one of Kailasanathar appear from inscriptions to have been built by the Pallava kings who ruled here till the eleventh century A.D. when it passed into the hands of the Cholas. It became the capital of Tondamandalam, and was in the possession of the Cholas till the first decade of the fourteenth century A.D. During the period of zenith of the Cholas, the city hummed with artistic activity which was displayed on a grand scale. It was crowded with temples and shrines. The sculptures in the cloistered court and the colouring of the paintings on the ceilings, with the inscriptions recorded on the walls, testify to the time when art and architecture enjoyed adequate state of patronage. The Muslim rule in the beginning of the fourteenth century was replaced by the domination of the Vijayanagar monarchs who made several grants to the temples for their maintenance for about three centuries. The recorded inscriptions, valuable as they are for historical purposes, have much to tell about the mighty rulers and their religious benefactions. Krishna Deva, the greatest of the Vijayanagar rulers, built two temples about A.D. 1502,

while a few other smaller shrines were the results of some other members' generosity.

Kanchi has been the abode of votaries of different faiths who set up their temples. Siva Kanchi and Vishnu Kanchi form the western and eastern parts of the city, while the Jain Kanchi is known as Tirupparutti-Kunram. For the Buddhists, it was the home of the famous logician Dinnaga. The Buddhist and Jain influences, however, waned with the emergence of Saiva and Vaishnava forces. The Saivite Nayanmans and the Vaishnava Alvaras flourishing from about the sixth century A.D. onwards inspired the people and the rulers alike with sweet devotional and melodious songs. Mahendra Varman I, one of the greatest Pallava Kings, built numerous temples dedicated to Siva and Vishnu. His son Narasimhavarman was the architect of the monolithic shrines, at Mahabalipuram known as the famous pagodas. The Kailashnath shrine at Kanchi and the Shore-temple at Mahabalipuram were his products, while Nandivarman II built the Mukteswar and the Vaikuntha-Perumal temples at Kanchi. The Ekamranath temple represents the *Prithi or* earth linga. These massive religious shrines with exquisite sculptures carved in relief have much to tell about the sanctity of the place and the religious devotion of the rulers and their subjects.

Kanchi was also a centre of learning enjoying the patronage of kings. The Pallava ruler Mahendravarman I was the author of *Mattavilasa-Prahasana* in Sanskrit, and during the time of his father flourished Bharavi, the author of *Kiratarjuniyam*. Its importance as a seat of learning is also evinced by the fact that Mayura-Sarman had to go to Kanchi for recognition in Vedic learning. Dandin, the author of *Dasakumaracharita*,

calling himself the great-grand-son of Bharavi enjoyed the patronage of Rajasimha or Narasimha II whom he mentions. If Bharavi and Dandin flourished in Kanchi, where rulers bestowed patronage on men of letters, the importance of this city as a centre of learning can easily be understood.

Kanchi was closely associated with the *Adi-guru* Sankaracharya. The *Peetha* established here is known as Kamakotipeetha. The present city continues to enjoy the devotion of the votaries of both Saivism and Vaishnavism. Its five temples with exquisite sculptures have interest for the artist and the pilgrim alike—the aesthetic and religious values are shared by both. The city withstood invasions several times in its history, and continues to be a living entity with a holy and hoary past.

Kapilavastu

THE identification of Kapilavastu, the capital of Suddhodana, the father of the Buddha, has been a subject of controversy among archaeologists. Its location, given in the Buddhist texts with the river Rohini flowing between the territories of the Sakyas and the Kolias, is not very helpful, nor is the find of the Rummindei pillar bearing Asoka's message on the occasion of his pilgrimage to the place of Buddha's birth. The location of Lumbini may be settled but that of Kapilavastu, not far from the former, seems a little difficult. It has been identified with Piprawa in the north of the Basti district, or with Tilaurakot, two miles north of Tauliwa, three and a half miles to the south-west of the Nepalese village of Nigliwa, situated in the Nepal Terai. Despite this difficulty, there is much to say about this ancient city on the basis of the Buddhist literature and the accounts left by the Chinese pilgrims who visited this place.

The story of the foundation of this city is given in the *Mahavastu*. It was also known as Kapilapura or Kapilahvayapura. The city according to the *Divyavadana* was connected with the Sage Kapila. The Sanskrit Buddhist literature gives a graphic description of the place, surrounded by seven walls, with many gardens, avenues and market places. Asvaghosha mentions that no unjust taxes were levied in the city. It was full of people housed in white-coloured beautiful mansions. It was wealthy, and was a centre of learning without people parading it. As the abode of the virtuous, qualities of the head and heart justified

persons' claim to be appointed as ministers who were intelligent, eloquent and courageous. The administration was purely based on lofty ideals. While some of the description of the city and its people, particularly the absence of poverty and prosperity showing in its full bloom, might sound poetic, the general account of the city and its lay-out—with a broad moat, big ramparts, and straight and magnificent roads running there might be nearer the truth. Literature also sheds light on the Mote-hall or the congress-hall in the city where the Sakyan nobles deliberated on matters of importance. It was in that hall that Prasenajit's proposal for the hand of a Sakyan princess was considered by the members of the Sakyan Parishad. The Buddha is said to have opened a new hall, especially built in his honour, but the Banyan grove —the Nigrodharma—was his favourite resort. Here he converted his father, while his own son Rahula was ordained by Sariputra. Living the life of a monk, the Sakyan prince in his own city of birth, went with a begging bowl for his alms everyday. His first journey to the city after a period of more than six years, when he had attained enlightenment, caused stir and excitement among the people, and the ladies rushed to have a glance of their monk-prince from the balconies of their houses. After the death of the Buddha, the Sakyans claimed a share of his ashes and set up a stupa over them. Shortly afterwards, Vidudabha waged a war against the Sakyas and destroyed them. The city lost its glory, and it seems to have never revived.

Fahien and Hiuen-tsang both visited the city. According to the former, it was thinly populated with towers set up at various places. The latter estimates the circuit of the district at 4000 *li* or 667 miles, which, according to

Cunningham, agrees very well with the size of the tract lying between the Ghagra and the Gandak from Fyzabad to the confluence of those rivers. In Fahien's time Kapila or Kapilavastu was literally a vast solitude which had neither king nor people, but only a few monks and some ten or twenty houses. It is only suggestive of the desolate nature of the place with hardly any conspicuous trace of the city at that time—nearly twelve centuries later. Hiuen-tsang in the seventh century A.D. found the place so utterly ruined that it was impossible to ascertain its original size.

Lately, Rumindae, the place of the Buddha's birth with the pillar of Asoka bearing his inscription, has come into limelight. It continues to be the centre of attraction for the Buddhist pilgrims. Ruins of Kapilavastu—the capital of the Sakyas, at one time a flourishing city, have not been traced. The difficulty is greater, since in Hiuen-tsang's time itself there was hardly any trace of the old city. Another inscription of Asoka from Nigali Sagar refers to the enlargement of the stupa of Kanakamuni after the fourteenth year of his reign. This only suggests that the region located by the finds of the two inscriptions was at one time the centre of great political and religious activities.

Kashi–Varanasi

KASHI, signifying the lustre of the light emanating from the supreme spirit, the most ancient city in India, is probably the only one where the Ganga has not changed its course visibly. The famous ghats remind one of human efforts in different ages to cater to the spiritual and sentimental aspirations of people for whom a dip in the sacred water of the river freed them from all sins. To them death in this city of Lord Siva was deliverance from the process of *Avagaman*—freedom from earthly bondage. It was also known as Varanasi, because of its geographical location between the two rivulets—Varna and Asi. The city was given several other names as well: Avimuktaka, Anandakanana and Mahasmasana. It constantly received veneration of the people from all parts of India. To the Buddhists, it was not far from here that at the famous deer park, now in Sarnath, Buddha delivered his first sermon after attaining enlightenment. The city attracted traders from far off places like Taxila, one such being the hero of the Shyama Jataka. Although it was a bone of contention between Kosala and Magadha, it had not lost its political identity and importance. Finally, it got merged in the empire of Magadha. Sisunaga, the viceroy at this place, was chosen as king of Magadha after the patricidal rulers following Bimbisara had exhausted the patience of the people.

The Nandas, and following them the Mauryas ruled over Kashi. The famous inscription of Asoka, with a message of peace mixed with a strict warning of exemp-

lary punishment for those creating dissension in the Buddhist Church, is suggestive of Kashi being an important Buddhist centre with monastic establishments located here. The hold of the Sungas, before it passed on to the Kushanas, is evident from the reference to this place in the *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali, the contemporary of Pushyamitra. The finds of a few Indo-Greek seals from Rajghat might point to its being sacked by these foreigners on their way to Kusumadhvaja (Pataliputra). The Kushanas realised its political importance and placed there a Kshatrapa named Vanaspara and a Mahakshatrapa Kharapallana to rule as their deputies. It continued to have Buddhist religious establishments. Bhikshu Bala donated here the image of the Bodhisattva (Buddha). Saivism also prospered here, with the other cults of the Yakshas and Nagas. As a place of pilgrimage its importance was gradually in ascendance. The Puranas include it in the Gupta empire from the time of Chandra Gupta I. Here also grew up a school of sculpture using Chunar sandstone. It is noted for its sobriety and serenity, flourishing as a national school of art, free from any trace of foreign influence. Kashi—Varanasi during the period of the Gupta rulers was becoming a strong centre of Siva worship with the Mahalingas set up in different parts of the city. Hiuen-tsang, in the seventh century A.D., describes it as a kingdom about 4000 *li* or 667 miles in circuit, its people gentle and polished, families in affluence, believing in the doctrines of Hinduism, but not showing scant respect for the religion of the Buddha. A hundred temples of the Hindu gods, with Mahesvara as the presiding deity, symbolised the religious spirit of the people, while a modest number of thirty Buddhist monasteries contained about three thou-

sand monks. In the city itself there were thirty Hindu temples.

As an important city in Northern India, Varanasi did not escape the upheavals on the political horizon. It was an administrative centre under the Gurjara-Pratiharas, while in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it became an important seat of the Gahadvalas. The famous ruler Govinda Chandra presided over its destiny, but in the years following it fell before the Ghori onslaught—taken and destroyed by the forces of Qutub-uddin. The city passed into the hands of the Muslims, but its reputation as a centre of learning and the home of the intellectuals remained untarnished. Some of its celebrities even enjoyed the patronage of Muslim rulers and nobles.

The history of Benaras under the British in the latter half of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries is a record of treachery through which Raja Chet Singh's kingdom was annexed on his failure to provide a contingent and pay a huge fine which kept on accumulating with subsequent entreaties by the Raja. The city was annexed with a British Resident stationed there. The line of Chet Singh however, continued with only a shadow of power which it exercised from the other side of the Ganges and paid heavy revenue to the company. It was visited by many westerners some of whom have given an account of it—portraying the unchangeable manners of the people and their devotion to religion. This remarkable city, the ecclesiastical metropolis with its lofty temples, narrow alleys and towering stone houses, many containing elaborate carvings in stone, was the richest and probably the most populous one in India, in the eyes of those westerners who saw it. In the words of Macaulay, in

wealth, population, dignity and sanctity it was among the foremost in Asia. Its half a million of human beings were crowded into the labyrinth of lofty alleys, rich with shrines, and minarets and balconies, and the broad and stately flights of steps descending to the bathing ghats, with the schools and temples drawing crowds of pious Hindus from every province.' Commerce and industry were no less an attraction. 'From the looms of Benaras went forth the most delicate silks that adorned the walls of St. James and of Versailles; and in the bazars, the muslins of Bengal and the sabres of Oudh were mingled with the jewels of Golcunda and the shawls of Cashmere.'

Varanasi was never a university town, but it did attract scholars who sat at the feet of the famous savants teaching the Vedas and subjects of higher education. Individual scholars promoted the cause of learning. The possible exodus of the scholars from the north-west, affected by the Muslim onslaught, seems to have given an impetus to the local talents. The Gahadvala grants were meant for the learned Brahmins conducting academic institutions. The greatest scholar in the Medieval period was Kavindracharya who expounded the teachings of Hindu scriptures. His exposition of *Sankarabhashya* to the Mughal emperor Shahjehan was with a purpose : to lift the imposition of *Jazia* on the sacred tirthas. Indirectly, it inspired prince Dara Shikoh whose *Majhaul Bahrain*—'the mingling of two oceans'—is a fine example of the synthesis of Upanishadic thought and Islamic monism. Eminent personalities on the intellectual plane from Kashi attracted foreigners like Bernier, who presents a graphic picture of the academic life of Varanasi in his time. 'The Athens of India, whither resort the Brahmins and other devotees who are the only persons to apply

their minds to study, the town resembles the schools of the ancients ; the masters are scattered over different parts of the town in private houses. These teachers have four or five disciples, the most eminent ones having twelve to fifteen and the period of stay extended up to ten or twelve years.'

Varanasi, as the home of Hindu literature, life and thought, breathed a new religious air of *Bhakti* emanating from Ramanand and his disciple Kabir, followed by Tulsidas—the celebrated author of *Ramacharitmanas*—now inscribed on the marble walls of the recently set up Tulsi Manas Mandir. Here in this city Bhattojidikshita wrote his famous grammar *Siddhanta Kaumudi*, followed by Nagojibhatta who wrote a commentary on Patanjali's *Mahabhashya*. Experiment in Hindi prose writing was made by Bharatendu Babu Harishchandra early in the nineteenth century. He was also a poet of Brajabhasha and his songs are devoted to Radha and Krishna. Painting, music and fine arts were not alien to this place. The Shirki kings of Jaunpur, who exercised sovereignty over Varanasi, encouraged these finer trends of human effort. The pristine Mughal school of painting, stressing on miniature portraits, happily blended with the earlier trend based on Rajasthani paintings with religion as the theme, well-illustrated in manuscripts. With the influence of the British School, water-colour painting became a prominent feature in the local artistic tradition. Music still continues to be the monopoly of Kashi with the new trends—Khayal, Thappa, Thumri and Kajjri and Dhrupad—sung by the distinguished singers of the well-established gharanas or schools to the accompaniment of sarangi and tabla, which have their distinguished instrument-players. The Shahnai, too, has its specialists who have

created names for themselves. The Kashi silk with its thread as thin as hair, its brocade and zari works, continues to enjoy monopoly in silk trade.

Varanasi still enjoys the homage of people of all shades. To a pious Hindu death here is deliverance; it is the destination of his spiritual urge. To a seeker of knowledge, the place is not without its savants distinguished in religion and philosophy. The rich traditions of music, dancing and craftsmanship draw the sensualists and the materialists to its bosom. In the words of Havell—'here the student may read a living commentary, more convincing than any record ever written, painted or sculptured, of the life of ancient Egypt, Babylon, Nineveh and Greece'. A better tribute to Varanasi and the sacred Ganga, is aptly given by poet Iqbal in his simple words—'Eternal flowing water of the Ganga, remember ye the days when our caravan landed on your bank'. Recent excavations at Rajghat in Kashi seek to expose the antiquity of the city and its buried past. The living Kashi has a hoary past, with its chequered history of ups and downs and a distinct future with its rich traditions.

Kausambi

KAUSAMBI, the metropolis of king Udayana, the hero of the famous Vasavadatta romance, figuring so prominently in literature—later Vedic, Buddhist and the Puranas—the scene of the Buddha's activities and his sermons in the ninth rainy season, seems to be in the limelight now. The spade of the archaeologist has uncovered the ruins of this city which lie at Kosam, a village twenty-eight miles south-west of Allahabad. Its foundation dates back to the later Vedic period. It is mentioned as the capital of the Vatsas. According to the Puranas, when the capital of the Pandavas at Hastinapur was swept away by floods at the time of Ikshvaku, fifth in descent from Parikshit, the capital was shifted to Kausambi. In the time of the Buddha, its king was Parantaka followed by his son Udena or Udayana. It was a city of great importance at that time, and Anand mentions it as one of the places suitable for the Lord's *parinirvana*. It was thirty leagues by river from Varanasi. The high road connecting Mahissati (Mahishmati) with Rajagaha (Rajagriha) passed through this place. There were four Buddhist establishments at that time, donated by the most eminent citizens of the place for the Buddhist order —Ghositarama, Kukkutarama, Pavarikambabana, and Badarikarama. Ruins of the first one have been excavated recently. The political importance of this capital of Udayana seems to have been lost with the merger of this important janapada in the empire of the Nandas, followed by that of the Mauryas and the Sungas.

Patanjali mentions the city in his *Mahabhashya*. It continued to be under the occupation of the Kushanas, as an inscription of the year 2 of king Kanishka and a seal of this ruler were found here. Probably it had no administrative importance, since the Kushana Kshatrapas were stationed at Varanasi. An inscription recorded on a stone pillar dated in the year 107 of Maharaja Vaisravana is suggestive of some local dynasty ruling here between the Kushanas and the Guptas. The Allahabad Prasasti of Samudragupta recorded on the Asokan pillar does not specifically mention this place, though the pillar itself is supposed to be from Kausambi. The Kosam inscription of Maharaja Bhimavarman dated in the year 139 was discovered here by General Cunningham. This ruler was very probably a feudatory of Skandagupta. When Hiuen-tsang visited the place in the time of Harsha, the capital was 30 *li* or 5 miles in circuit, while the circumference of the kingdom was more than 6000 *li* which might be a mistake for 600 *li* or a hundred miles. The place was under the hold of the Pratihara rulers of Kanauj. The Kara inscription, dated in the year 1093 (A.D. 1036), records the grant of the village of Payalasa (modern Pras) in the Kausambi-mandala to Mathura-Vikata of Pabhosa for perpetual use by his descendants. It is by the last Pratihara ruler Yasahpala of Kanauj. The later history of this place is associated with Allahabad.

Excavations carried on earlier on a small scale here in 1937–38, followed by a gap of more than a decade, and then on a big scale have revealed twenty structural phases of its occupation which have been broadly put into four periods. Each structural phase is supposed to have lasted for about seventy-five years, and the latest one is placed about 515 A.D., connected with the period

of Huna menace in ancient India. The earliest period I is associated with the earthen rampart, rivetted with a thick battered brick veneer, and later a corbelled arched drain covers the period, till the end of the 9th century B.C. Similar features are also noticed at Harappa. A rectangular massive fortification wall enclosing a large part of the area began in this period, with repairs and additions made in succeeding stages. Originally, the defences were of a mud-rampart-wall with a burnt-brick revetment on the exterior laid in a batter. A subsequent rampart was laid in the second period beginning with the fifth structural stage. Guard rooms, bastions, and a stone paved corbelled drain were added. There was further extension of the rampart in the third stage. Evidence of human sacrifice was noticed outside the fortifications. The defences showing additions and alterations in the fourth and fifth stages, fell into disuse in the last phase with the destruction of the town by the Huna Chief Toramana whose seal was found.

The Syena-cheti—the eagle form altar outside the eastern gate at the foot of the defences symbolising human sacrifice, with the discovery of a fire-place, animal and human bones, including a human skull, seems to be in conformity with the description given in the *Satapatha Brahmana*. Mitra coins found in abundance from corresponding levels are suggestive of the sacrifice taking place during the period of their rule. Traces of the palace of king Udayana are supposed to have been found in the south-west corner with the use of rubble, followed by dressed-stone facing. The palace consisted of halls flanked by rooms connected by openings. The absence of the North-Black polished ware in the earlier phase and its use only in the third and the last phase is

suggestive of the antiquity of this place. Inscriptional evidence confirms the ruins of the Goshitarama monastery which has recently been uncovered. The monastery consisted of a courtyard with rooms in the interior and a large stupa in the courtyard. Several rebuilding phases are noticed here.

This ancient city of northern India seems to have had a fairly long period of human occupation. Literature and excavations trace its antiquity to the later Vedic period about the twelfth century B.C. It was important during the period of the Epics and in the time of the Buddha. For the Jains, it had its importance as the birth-place of the sixth Tirthankara. It still contains the temple of Padmaprabhu with the image of Chandanvala. Although it was the seat of the famous king Udayana, its political importance seems to have faded under the Magadhan rulers. Local kings—with their set type of coins—ruled between the earlier centuries preceding and following the Christian era, till its occupation under the Kushanas followed by the Guptas. A rich range of sculptures, terracottas, figurines, coins, moulds, beads and bangles, sealings and ivory objects, found in excavations have something to tell about the artistic activities of this place in different periods. A seal bearing the appellation Hunaraja, and another counter-struck with the name of Toramana, speak of its occupation and destruction by the Hunas. When Hiuen-tsang visited the place, the ten Buddhist monasteries of the Hinayanists noticed by him were in ruins. The people were enterprising, fond of arts, and cultivated religious merit. The city was losing its political importance, but it did not fade completely till about the middle of the eleventh century A.D. We hear no more of Kausambi, and it was difficult to identify this ancient

city till the inscription of Maharaja Bhimavarman came to Cunningham's his rescue. Attempts to revive its ancient glory by uncovering and exposing the buried sites might give an insight to the layout of the city in different periods.

Kusinagara

UNLIKE Kapilavastu, this place associated with the Buddha's *parinirvana* or death is settled and located at Kasia, a village in the Deoria district of Uttar Pradesh. Here a big stupa existed till very recently, symbolising the place of his death. The statue of the dying Buddha is now placed in the temple set up in the vicinity. Kusinara or Kusinagar became one of the four holiest places declared by the Buddha as fit for pilgrimage, the other three being Kapilavatthu, Buddha Gaya, and Isipatana (Sarnath). Situated at the junction of the river Rapti and the smaller Gandak, this capital of the Mallas was twentyfive yojanas from Rajagaha, and nineteen Yojanas from Vesali. The Mallas were great admirers of the Buddha, and their small city was chosen by the Lord for his *parinirvana*. It is mentioned in the Buddhist texts that the Buddha had reasons for coming to Kusinara from Rajagaha. It was the proper venue for the preaching of a certain Buddhist text (*Mahasudassana sutta*) ordaining Subhadda into the Buddhist order. It facilitated also the division of his relics by Drona who lived there. He had come here earlier as well, and during some of these visits he stayed in a wood called Baliharana, and there he preached two of the *Kusinarasutta* and the *Kirtisutta*. A third *Kusinarasutta* was preached by him while staying at Upavattana.

It is said that when Anand, the chief disciple of the Buddha, felt disappointed at the Lord choosing this place, the latter pointed out to him that in ancient times it had

been Kusavati, the Royal city of the Mahasudassana. Between Kusinara and Pava—the centre of the other autonomous tribe of the Mallas—lay the stream of Kakutha on the bank of which was Ambavana. Beyond that was the river Hirannyavati, and near that city to the south-west lay Upavattana, the *sala* grove which was the last resting place of the Buddha. After his death, the body of the Lord was carried into the city by the northern gate, and was brought out by the eastern gate to Makutabandhana, where it was cremated. A festival in honour of relics lasted there for seven days. According to the *Divyavadana*, Asoka visited the city where the Buddha had attained his *parinirvana*. The Jatakas mention Kusavati, first known as the capital city of the Mallas, when they had a monarchical constitution, as a rich and prosperous city. Later on, its name was changed to Kusinara with a republican constitution. Its area, according to the *Dighanikaya*, was twelve yojanas in length and seven in breadth, with seven ramparts, four gates and seven palm tree avenues. The Mallas, like the Sakyas of Kapilavastu, had their assembly hall where they discussed all matters—political and religious. A messenger was sent to them at the time of the Buddha's death, and soon after they met in their hall to accord a state funeral to the Tathagata. An idea of the city can be had from the famous 'war of relics' scene carved on the Sanchi gateway.

The city, however, lost its political importance after the merging of their tiny kingdom in the empire of the Magadhan rulers. Its religious sancitity was in no way disturbed. Buddhist dignitaries and pilgrims visited this place. After Asoka we have an account of the two Chinese pilgrims well-known to History. At the time of Hiuen-tsang's visit, the walls of Kusinagar were in ruins,

and the place was almost deserted, but the brick foundations of the old capital occupied the site of the mounds of ruins to the north-west of the village of Anurudhwa. Matha-kunwar-ka-kot or 'the fort of the dead prince' signifies the spot where the body of the Buddha was cremated. The Nirvana stupa at Kasia was opened by Cunningham in 1876, and subsequent excavations in the early part of the nineteenth century have revealed the remains of many ancient structures. These comprise six groups, the first of which consists of an isolated brick stupa some fifty feet in height. It bears the name of Devisthana or Ramabhara Bhavani. The second is a small mound of ruins to the north-west of Anrudhwa, while the third is Matha-kunwar-ka-kot about a mile west of the Kambhar stupa comprising of a temple with a colossal recumbent image of the dying Buddha, a large stupa and several monasteries. A colossal statue of the seated Buddha, called Matha Kunwar was recovered a few hundred yards away from the Kot at its south-west. This statue in its total height is $10\frac{1}{2}'$ with a width of $4\frac{3}{4}'$. The famous lying image of the dying Buddha is some twenty feet in length and it bears an inscription recording its erection by an abbot named Haribala in the fifth century A.D.

A visit to Kasia, now connected through a nice motor road, may not have any charm of natural beauty like any other tourist centre ; it, nevertheless, has its religious importance as a centre of pilgrimage. To the Buddhists, in particular, connected as it is with the *parinirvana* of the Lord, it has its special sanctity. Lately the stupa erected on the site of the Buddha's cremation and exposed by Cunningham has crumbled down. It might be set up again, signifying the importance of the place, which has lost its glory but not its religious attraction.

Nalanda

NALANDA, at one time the greatest academic centre in the east, with its lofty structures, spacious campus, and eminent men of learning and scholarship teaching here and pupils selected after a rigorous test and drawn from all parts of India and the Far East, now lies in solitude at a distance of 10 kilometres north of Rajgir. Although a small station on the Bakhtiarpur-Rajgir section of the Eastern Railway in Bihar, the ruins of this academic city lie at a distance of more than 8 kilometres from the station. Epigraphic and literary references, the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims, and excavations carried on here for a number of seasons, have much to tell of the antiquity of the site, its history, and the story of the university from the time when its keel was laid down to the period of its destruction.

According to the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-tsang, the city was named after the Naga, who lived in a tank in the middle of the mango grove. According to another source, accepted by the pilgrim, the Bodhisattva—the Buddha in one of his former births—had once his capital here, and gave alms without intermission, hence the city was so named. The Buddha is mentioned as having several times stayed there, and during the last visit to this place Sariputra had affirmed his faith in the Tathagata. In the Buddha's time it was already an influential and prosperous town thickly populated. It, however, became the victim of severe famines which could account for the loss of its importance. According to the Jain chronicles,

it was a suburb of Rajagriha and Mahavira spent fourteen rainy seasons here. As it was connected with Sariputra, Asoka had erected a temple here. According to Taranath, Nagarjuna, the famous Mahayana philosopher, began his studies here, and he also became a high priest in his *alma mater*. Aryadeva, a philosopher connected with the Madhyamika school and Asanga of the Yogachara school of Buddhism are also associated with this place.

Excavations have little to support Nalanda's claim as a centre of learning before the Guptas. According to Hiuen-tsang it was Sakraditya who built here a monastery, and his example was emulated by his successors—Buddhagupta, Tathagatagupta, Baladitya and Vajra. The earlier Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien does not mention the setting up of the monasteries at Nalanda in his time. Hiuen-tsang, of course, saw an eighty feet high image of the Buddha raised by Purnavarman, belonging to the early sixth century. Harsha contributed to the development of this centre by remitting the revenues of about a hundred villages as an endowment, while two hundred householders furnished in kind for meeting the needs of the students. Royal patronage was responsible for the prosperity of this centre. In Harsha's time a thousand monks were present at his consecration. Hiuen-tsang was warmly received and he resided here for a number of years. The pilgrim has given an account of the life of the monks and the subjects of study in this centre. The priests, numbering several thousands, were men of the highest ability and talent, of distinction and fame spreading through distant regions. Students seeking admission there had to show their ability by hard discussion with the keeper of the gate at the first instance. The courses

of study included scriptures of the Mahayana and Hinayana schools of Buddhism, logic, grammar, medicine, and purely Brahmanical texts including the Vedas. The place was bustling with activities. Its fame had spread all over the East as the centre of Buddhist learning and educational activities.

I-tsing, who reached India shortly afterwards in 673 A.D., has also recorded minute details about the life of the monks who at that time exceeded three thousand in number. Besides Buddhist scriptures, logic and metaphysics, and an extensive study of grammar formed part of the curriculum of studies. Strict rules of discipline were laid down for monks, and their daily life was regulated by a water-clock. Scholars who were the *alumni* of the university included, besides those mentioned earlier, Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandha, who were also the high priests; Dinnaga, the founder of the medieval school of logic, who had attained the title of *Tarka-pungava* by defeating a Brahmin scholar in disputation; Dharmapala, Silabhadra, the head of the institution at the time of Hiuen-tsang, and Dharmakirti. Santarakshita was invited several times to Tibet. From the eighth to the twelfth centuries A.D., Nalanda continued to enjoy the patronage of the Palas of Bengal, although, they established monasteries at several other places, like Vikramasila, Odantapuri, Jagaddala. An inscription of Devapala issued from Mudgagiri (Monghyr) records the grant of five villages at the request of the ruler of Suvarnadvipa, Balaputradeva, by Emperor Devapala for the maintenance of the monks at the monastery built by the Sumatran king. This record was found in excavations at the monastery site No. 1. There are several other records which were also found during the course of excavations.

The end of the university and the town seem to have been gradual. The decay of Buddhism due to a great extent to Tantrism involving secret principles and rituals, the crusade of the Brahmanical philosophers and scholars, and finally the invasion of Bakhtiar Khilji destroyed the image of this ancient town and seat of learning. The Turks displayed their vandalism destroying the monasteries, burning the library, and driving away the monks. The final blow extinguished the fire of learning. Attempt to revive and renovate the centre was unsuccessful. The city became barren and desolate and it was only in the sixties of the last century that the village of Baragaon was identified by Cunningham. Systematic excavations were carried on from 1915–16 onwards, revealing the different stages through which the town and the campus had passed and its extent. The excavations show that the city had a planned lay-out with symmetrical rows of monasteries leaving a wide space in between. The temples were solid structures of two tiers, the upper one housing the sanctum was approached by a flight of steps. Elegant pilasters and niches contain images which embellish the facades. Seven successive accumulations are noticeable in temple No. 3, which is more than 31 m. high. The fifth one is notable for the sculptural details dating from about the sixth century A.D., while the last two phases could be of the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D. The monasteries, in a rectangular shape, have open courtyards, while covered verandas provided entrance to the cells, arrayed on the four sides. The sculptures displayed in the niches are carved, or in the round in the shape of statues, and represent a school of art, popularly known as the Pala art. Besides statues of a special stone, bronze figures of this school are also notable. They

belong to the Buddhist pantheon, although the Brahmanical images are not negligible. The stucco figures in the niches, the small bronze pieces with minute details and careful execution, and statues point to the advanced nature of the artists' skill and their training. The art from this centre influenced that in Tibet and Nepal.

Attempt has recently been made to give Nalanda its lost position and prestige as an academic centre by setting up a Pali institute for advanced learning. The museum at the site, well-represented with the images found here, and the site itself well-protected with extensive lawns, give an idea of the once existing centre of learning with its big library, extensive campus, residential quarters, temples and monasteries, and the populous town. It still has its place not merely as a tourist centre, but also as an academic one which at one time drew scholars from far off places to drink deep at the fountain of learning.

Nasik

NASIK on the Godavari, supposed to be one of the five holiest places of the Hindus, the Kashi of western India, according to the tradition, is so called because the nose and ears of Surpanakha were cut by Lakshmana when he along with his brother Rama and sister-in-law Sita was living in exile at Panchavati on the site opposite to this place. The holiness of the Godavari associated with the Kumbha held here every twelve years, and the vicinity of the *Jyotirlinga* of Tryambakeshvara, besides the political and commercial importance of the city, are responsible for its frequent mention in literature, while a large number of inscriptions recorded in the famous rock-cut temples known as Pandulenas, associate this place with the Buddhists as well. Patanjali's *Mahabhashya* has the earliest reference to this place noticed as Nasikya. It is also mentioned in a Bharhut inscription recording the gift of Gorakshita of Nasika, the wife of Vasuka. Inscriptions in two Pandu caves record the grant of the people of Nasik and the gift of a Sramana minister of that place. This place, mentioned as Naski or Naisiki in the Puranas, Janasthana in the Ramayana, Nasikya in the Brihatsamhita can trace its antiquity to earlier times. The history of this city is closely associated with the Saka-Satavahana struggle which was waged in the second century A.D. The famous inscription of the reign of Vasisthiputra Sri Pulvmavi records the dedication of the great queen Gautami, mother of Sri Satakarni who had defeated the Sakas, Yavanas and Pahlavas and

destroyed the Kshaharata race. The gift of the cave in the record was for the Bhadayaniyas who are the donees in another record as well. There are several records of donations by Ushavadata, son-in-law of Nahapana, the Kshaharata Kshatrapa. References to guilds of potters and those dealing in hydraulic engines, and bankers with whom money was invested by the donors for some specific religious purpose, are interesting. One inscription from Bedsa records the gift of Pushya, son of the banker Ananda from Nasik. These records evidently are suggestive of the economic prosperity of the people of Nasik, their organised economic life and devotion to religion. This region, however, figured in the dispute between the Andhras and the Saka Kshatrapas. Ptolemy records it as one of the most sacred seats of Brahmanism, with important Buddhist remains, and noted for a group of rock-temples. The position of the city as a holy place is noted by the Jain writer Jinaprabhasuri. As a city full of temples and with memories of the epics, it experienced the usual acts of vandalism when a good many temples were destroyed by Aurangzeb, only to be restored under the Peshwas. The fuller history of the place is associated with that of Maharashtra, with practically no local significance.

Archaeological remains are associated with the famous Pandu lenas, the rock-cut caves about 300 feet above the road-level. These were excavated by the Bhadayaniyas, of the Hinayana school, who have left several records. Altogether 23 in number, these include four furnished and one unfurnished *vihara*, while the earliest is the Chaitya cave dating from the Christian era. The big *vihara* in cave no. 3 is 41 feet wide and 46 feet deep. Over the gate-way, the Bodhi tree, the dagoba, the *chakra*

and the *dvarapalas* or the gate-keepers are seen. That in cave 10 is slightly small, with the pillars containing bell-shaped capitals. It contains an inscription of the family of Nahapana. Another cave was the work of Indragni-datta, son of Dharmendera, a native of Sauvira. A figure of the Buddha attended by the Bodhisathvas Padmapani and Vajrapani can be seen in cave no. 23. The religious sanctity of Nasik seems to have attracted donors from Ujjain and Sauvira associated with Sindh.

Recent archaeological excavations carry the history of the city to the proto-historic times. Here on the south bank of the river were identified deposits of four periods—the lowest, representing the earliest, yielded microliths in association with a red-ware of ochrous colour occasionally painted in black. The culture of the Godavari seems to have a wider span, as is evident from the finds at other sites, the most important being at Nevasa on the Pravara, a tributary of the Godavari, in the Ahmadnagar district. This site provides a fuller index of the cultural sequence on the Godavari. The proto-historic phase ended in about the thirteenth century B.C., when the site was abandoned to be occupied again after about a period of nearly a thousand years in 400 B.C. This second period of occupation falls into two phases—the earlier one from 400–200 B.C., and the second one from B.C. 200–A.D. 50. The pottery of this period is a coarse red-ware with globular vessels, dishes, bowls, large jars, etc., followed by a black and red ware comprising jars, bowls, dishes and basins. Mud-walled houses, with soakage pits lined with bricks or rings, were exposed in this period of occupation. Large store-jars, iron implements, beads of terracotta, semi-precious stones, and bangles and other articles in use, with traces of glass were found in this

period. In the second phase, uninscribed cast copper coins and some sherds bearing criss-cross designs like those in the Andhra region were found. The third period dating from A.D. 50 to 200, when the Kshaharata ruled over this part of the country, is associated with the well-known red-polished ware. The houses were now built with kiln-burnt bricks and roofed with terracotta tiles. Bone, glass and gold were used for beads in this period. The last period covering the span from 1400 to 1875 is associated with the rule of the Muslim provincial governors, Mughals and Marathas with red or black pottery in some curious shapes.

While excavations shed light on the hoary antiquity of Nasik, the Pandu caves associate it with the period of the Andhra and Saka Kshatrapas. The *Ramayana* placing Panchavati on the other side of the Godavari connects it with Rama of the epic-fame. It, thus, becomes secred for the Hindus. The Buddhists, especially the Bhadayaniyas of the Hinayana sect had a number of *viharas* and *chaityas* carved out in the rocks. The city still retains its importance as a religious centre and a place of pilgrimage, especially at the Kumbha time—once in twelve years. The temples in Nasik and the one at Panchavati have attraction for the pilgrim and those interested in art. Tapobanaka, Tapovana and Panchavati are sites of importance with a religious background, and these add to the sanctity of the place.

Paithon

PAITHON on the northern bank of the river Godavari in the Aurangabad district of Maharashtra, represents the ancient Pratishthana, the Baithana of Ptolemy, which was the capital of the Satavahana kings. Literature and inscriptions record its importance while the 'Periplus of the Erythrea Sea' sheds light on its greatness. The city could trace its antiquity to a few centuries before the Christian era, being an important link in communication with the south. It might be associated with the Petanikas of the Asokan inscriptions who are identified with the Paithanikas or the inhabitants of Paithana on the Godavari. It is proposed by some scholars that these Paithanikas might have been the ancestors of the Satavahana rulers of Paithan. According to the author of the 'Periplus', the city was situated at a distance of 20 days' journey to the south of Barygaza, identified with Bharukachcha or Broach. It was then spoken of as the greatest city of the Dakshinapath or Deccan. From Paithon and Tagara, another very large city, goods were transported on wagons to Barygaza through difficult regions that had no roads. From Paithon, great quantities of onyx-stones, and from Tagara large supplies of common cotton cloth, muslins of all kinds, mallow, tinted cottons and various articles of local production, writes the author of the 'Periplus', were imported here. According to Ptolemy, it was the capital of Siroptolemaious or Siropolemaios representing the Sanskrit Sri-Pulomavi of the Nasik cave inscriptions.

Inscriptions also refer to this place. It is noticed in the Poona copper plate inscription of the Vakataka queen Prabhavati Gupta. It was here that the three plates of Govinda III dated in the year 794 A.D. were found. These add to the political importance of the city even after the decline of the Satavahanas whose metropolis it was. In the *Padma Purana* reference is made to a king named Vikrama in the town of Pratishthana. This Vikrama might be some Satavahana ruler. The clash of the rulers of this dynasty with the Sakas is annaled in inscriptions and legends. The Satavahanas as patrons of learning seem to have gathered in their capital men of letters. Gunadhya, the author of the *Brihathkatha*, was one such scholar, and he was a minister of king Hala of this dynasty.

Although the city declined in importance after the shifting of the capital to Deogarh, it continued to be a great centre of learning. The Brahmins of Paithon acknowledged Jnaneshwar Maharaja, Hemadri—associated with the *Dharma Sastras,* and Bhopadeva, the author of *Harinleela Muktaphala.* The famous Maharashtrian saint of the sixteenth century, Ekanath, an erudite scholar and a great Vaishnava preacher, also belonged to this place.

Paithon, now a small town with a few temples and scattered mounds observed to the east, reminds one of its past as the centre of trade and metropolis of the Satavahanas. Even when it lost its political importance, it was a seat of men of letters and saints—a position which it enjoyed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Pataliputra

PATALIPUTRA, also known as Pushpapura and Kusumpura, the Palibothra of the Greek historians—particularly Megasthenes, and the Pa-lin-fu of the Chinese pilgrims, claims the honour of being the metropolis of the famous dynasties of the Mauryas, the Sungas and the Guptas. It witnessed the parricides under the Sisunagas, the assassination of Kalasoka by Mahapadma, and of Brihadratha by Pushyamitra. Damage and destruction by the Greeks who probably ransacked the city either during the time of the last Mauryan ruler or when Pushyamitra himself was ruling suggest that it had seen changing of fortunes. Its foundation was laid at a time when Ajatsatru was expecting an attack from the Vajjis located on the northern side of the river. The capital was transferred in the time of his successor Udayin from Rajgir to Pataliputra. The city flourished as the royal capital and also as a seat of learning for many centuries with its high society and politics, its palaces and beautiful gardens. Its celebrities included Chanakya, who brought about a *coup-d' etat*; Patanjali, the famous commentator who admits in his *Mahabhashya* of having taken part in the sacrifice performed by Pushyamitra; Asvaghosha, the poet, philosopher and dramatist, who enjoyed the patronage of king Kanishka. King Bimbisara had honoured the Buddha by camping on this side of the Ganges awaiting his return from Vaisali, and filling the streets with flowers. The city boasted of a number of sangharamas, and it was also the venue of the third

Buddhist council. It witnessed the disputation between the heretics and the Buddhist monks of southern India, especially Deva, a disciple of Nagarjuna, and Gunamati. The description of the city left by Megasthenes who stayed here for a number of years, its reference in literature—Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit—and its notice by the Chinese pilgrim who visited it, shed light on its glory, importance, and finally its decline.

At the confluence of this river (Ganges), with another (the Erannobas), writes Megasthenes, is situated Pataliputra. It is of the shape of a parallelogram and is surrounded by a wooden wall, pierced with loopholes for the discharge of arrows. Evidence of wooden structure noticed by the Greek ambassadors is corroborated by the finds in excavations. This ancient metropolis and its palaces were unmatched, and even those of Susa and Ecbatana could not vie with its beauty and grandeur. The tradition of its greatness was carried to the time of Asoka. It enjoyed its greatest glory in his time, and the income from the four gates of this city is said to have been four hundred thousand kahapanas daily with another one hundred thousand for his sabha or council. The Sungas and the Guptas also contributed towards its greatness. Pushyamitra and the sacrifices, which he performed here, account for the revival of Brahmanism, and so also Samudragupta after his extensive conquests emulated the example set up by the Sunga predecessor in this city. During the reign of Chandragupta II, Pataliputra was a magnificent and populous city. According to Fa-hien, the royal palace and the halls in the midst of the city, the walls and the gates and the inlaid sculpture work seemed to be the work of super-human spirits. A grand and beautiful Mahayana monastery by the side of Asoka's

tope, and another of the Hinayana school, accommodated about six to seven hundred monks. The destruction of the city, forecast by the Buddha, due to fire, water and feud amongst kinsmen, was very probably true, though the exact time of its end in the ancient period is difficult to fix. It is proposed that this famous and populous city was not ruined until the Huna invasion in the fifth century A.D. Harsha did not attempt to revive or restore its lost glory, as his capital was located at Sthaneshwar with Kanyakubja or Kanauj as the second most important city. Sasanka of Gauda, who had uprooted the Bodhi tree at Bodha Gaya, was also responsible for vandalism in this city. He destroyed the Buddha's footprints and demolished many Buddhist temples and monasteries. Under the Palas it was the camp of their victory, and they tried to improve its status and revive its glory. The Muslim and British periods of Indian History have also left their stamps on this city.

Excavations were carried out here from 1912–1915 at Kumrahar and Bulandibag, and extended to certain other sites in recent years. These couldn't be undertaken on a bigger scale because of the high water-level and the location of the city, mostly on the ancient settlement. Four ancient periods from circa 600 B.C. to A.D. 600 were located in excavations, while the last phase could be dated from A.D. 1600 onwards. The earliest period has the characteristic North Black polished pottery with red and grey wares, iron implements and terracotta figures. Fragmentary architectural pieces bearing the high Mauryan polish have been found in this period. In the second period, the same ceramic industries continued with degeneration in their fabric, and the emergence of the Punch-marked coins of the Kausambi lanky-bull type

which might have come there through trade. The N.B.P. ware, which diminishes in the second period, completely fades out in the third period. The pottery is generally red or grey covering the period from c 100–300 A.D. A gold amulet, modelled on the coins of Huvishka with legend on one side and the Greek goddess Ardochsho on the other, was found in this level. The last ancient period yielded plain red ware and terracotta figurines. Objects of Gupta workmanship were also found in this period—covering from A.D. 300–600, followed by a long break. In the last period from A.D. 1600 onwards glazed pottery, glass beads, ivory dice and a coin of Shah Alam were found.

The prophecy of the Buddha appears to be true. The earlier finds at Kumrahar, where eighty heaps of polished stones, in eight rows of ten heaps, were discovered amidst a deposit of charcoal and ash suggest some conflagration reducing the wooden structure of the pillared hall. An enormous brick-work and structures from the Mauryan to the late Gupta times were also exposed. So also at Bulandibagh some brick building of Gupta date was found in 1926–27—a unique wooden construction with long wooden planks at the bottom. A similar wooden structure without the bottom planks was also exposed at Goshain-khan, half a mile east of Bulandibagh.

Pataliputra, Kusumapura or modern Patna, with its ancient past—a city set up about two thousand five hundred years ago for strategic reasons—enjoyed the position of the metropolis under successive dynasties. Hallowed by the horse sacrifices performed here a couple of times, the scene of the third Buddhist council with sangharamas and viharas, and Asoka's tope, a seat of

learning which could claim as its *alumni*, eminent grammarians, scholars and philosophers, like Patanjali, Asvaghosa and Asanga, this ancient city has still its political character. It is, no doubt, a seat of learning as also the state capital which produced some eminent men of letters and politicians in recent years.

Madura

MADURA, the most modern and equally populous city, next to the metropolis of the State of Madras, was the flourishing capital of the Pandyas even before the beginning of the Christian era. The city, noted for its temple of Meenakshi around which it had developed in ancient times, was also a great centre of culture and commerce to which flocked traders and emissaries from the western world. Its ancient rulers had patronised men of arts and letters. Its history is not a chequered one, but a continuing process in which the Pandyas, the Cholas, rulers of Vijayanagar and even the Mohammadans—though for a very short period—made their contributions. The enhancement of the beauty and splendour of the town is equally due to the Nayakas from the middle of the sixteenth upto the end of the third quarter of the eighteenth century, who set up magnificent structures symbolising their religious zeal and artistic and architectural bent of mind. A record of the history of this ancient city with a brief panoramic survey of its great temples might not be out of place here.

The ancient city seems to have been named after Mathura in the north which was a great religious centre. It would as well mean 'the sweet place.' Religious devotion in an atmosphere of sweetness seems to have been the factor responsible for its foundation of which no reliable date can be given. It is mentioned by the Geographer Ptolemy as Modoura, situated on the banks of the river Vaigai, the second capital of the Southern Pandyas. From the king of this place, there came to

Caesar Augustus gifts and embassy accompanied by the Indian Sophist, who committed himself to the flames at Athens. Frequent references to Madurai in classical accounts leave little doubt regarding the importance of this place, supposed to be the Mediterranean emporium in the south. The Pandyan kings noted for their generosity and learning contributed their mite in the development of this ancient city. The Khilji inroad under Malik Kafur subjected the city to a gruelling experience of depredation and destruction. The outer wall with its fourteen towers was pulled down. The two shrines of Sundareshwara and Meenakshi alone escaped their wanton fury. In 1372 under Kampan Udaiyar, the Musalmans were expelled from the city, and the four lofty gopurams or gateways were rebuilt. The Naik dynasty, at first the feudatories of the Vijayanagar kingdom, but later on independent rulers, erected the *Sahasra-Stambha Mandapadam* or 'Hall of a Thousand Pillars' in the times of Vishwanath. The group of pillars, carved from single huge stones in the Hall of a Thousand Pillars, are marvels of industry and artistic talent. The temple, dedicated to Siva in his Sundareshwara form and the local goddess Meenakshi after whom it is named, forms a parallelogram 850 feet long from north to south and 750 feet broad. It is surrounded by the famous gateways, the tallest one of which, the south Gopuram is 150 feet high. Thirumala Naik was the greatest of the dynasty and his outstanding work in this temple is the Pudu (or new) *mandapam*. It is a rectangular porch 333 feet by 105 feet with a granite roof supported by four parallel rows of 124 sculptured stone pillars, each 20 feet high, but without any duplication in design.

The shrine of Sundareshwara, which is double the size

of the famous one of his spouse, is approached through long and spacious corridors. The famous Mukkuruni Pillayar—Ganesa, or Ganapati flanked by the two dvarapalas or gatekeepers guards the huge entrance to the shrine. Siva is depicted in this temple in his dancing pose, the famous Nataraja, which is by far the best. He is also shown seated with his consort Parvati on Kailasa. The ten-headed Ravana bears the mountain in his *yogi*. The divine couple seated on Nandi, and Siva in the *Ardhanarisvara* form—half male and half female—are also portrayed.

The chapel of the famous *Tamil Sangam* lies at the north-western end of the temple. This institution was set up by forty-eight learned men who sat in judgement over all literary productions. The Pandyan King received these intellectuals with great honour, and they constituted the first *Sangam*. The palace built by Tirumala Naik is another old monument and is a symbol of secular architecture.

This well-planned and well-fortified city of Madura—the southern capital of the Pandyas, to which grace, beauty and splendour were added by the Naiks, especially Tirumala—still retains its pristine glory, with the famous Meenakshi temple serving as the focal point. It is ancient but more modern with its textile industrial plants, and the Vaigai dam. It is a growing city which can boast of its living past and hope for a bright future.

Mahishmati

MAHISSATI or Mahishmati, supposed to be the capital of south Avanti, a city founded at the same time as Champa, in the sixth century B.C., lay on the route from Godavari to Savatthi. According to the *Mahabharata*, the Mahishakas were the same people as Mahishmakas, inhabiting the region between the Vindhya and Rikshya with their capital at Mahishmati which can be identified with the modern Mandhata. Recent excavations at Maheshwar and Navdatoli in the west Nimar district of the Madhya Pradesh, about 60 miles south of Indore, facing each other on the southern and northern banks of the Narmada respectively, suggest the former's identification with Mahishmati.

According to the Puranas, it was founded by king Muchukunda. The Buddhist texts distinguish it from the northern capital of Avanti at Ujjayini.

The two sites, Maheshwar and Navdatoli on the opposite banks of the Narmada, have exposed objects carrying the tale of human occupation there from the pre-historic times to the late medieval period. Of the seven periods of such occupation—the first two represent the early and middle stone ages, while the third one belongs to the proto-historic period. Copper microliths, beads of semi-precious stones and terracotta, and a red-slipped ware—usually painted in black—present the proto-historic culture at both the sites. This Malwa Ware—the term assigned to the pottery which has a wide coverage, along with a white painted black-and-red ware and a white-slipped

ware painted in black or vermilion with the same designs noticed on the other ware, occur in the first phase or period of occupation. The black-and-red ware disappears in the next phase, but another type of pottery called the Jorwe Ware of Godavari valley, in black or red appears in the third phase and continues in the fourth one as well with marked degeneration in ceramics. Bowls and dishes with or without stem in the Malwa Ware and the white-slipped and black-and-red wares, and the large number of microliths, blades, lunate, trapeze, scrapers and flakes also occur at Maheswar during this proto-historic period of occupation. The opposite site had a dense habitation with houses—square, oblong or round—interconnected with passages. These were built with bamboo-matting and posts, and plastered with mud. Lime was used for whitewashing these dwellings. It is suggested that the roofs, too, were of bamboos and reeds. Some light is thrown on the dietary habits of the people who used wheat and rice, besides other grains.

The proto-historic period of occupation both at Maheswar and Navdatoli ended about the fourteenth century B.C., and the site was abandoned only to be occupied after a long gap in period IV with which are associated the black-and-red ware and the North-Black polished ware and early coins. This period may be dated from about the fourth century B.C. to about the first century B.C. Iron was found in this period, besides terracotta figurines, toys, bangles and beads of semi-precious stones and glass. Flood seems to have destroyed a stupa at Navdatoli of which some of the bricks inscribed in letters of the third century B.C. have also been found. A higher sense of town-planning and living standard can be assessed by the use of kiln-burnt bricks, the

remains of houses, although limited only to post-holes, pebble walls and ring-wells. This was the period of prosperity for the city of Mahishmati, as evident from literature as well. The fifth period of Maheswara is dated from 100 B.C. to A.D. 100 with the gradual fading of the black-and-red ware and the popular use of tan and burnished red wares. A large number of glass objects are also found while brick-bats and tiles provide evidence for proper housing which we shall refer to in detail. This period is followed by the red-polished ware culture which seems to have extended over a large part of western India. The ware is akin to the Roman-Samian ware with a long and narrow-necked spotted ware commonly described as 'Sprinkler', and its origin might be traced to the Mediterranean region. The black-and-red ware is being replaced to a much greater extent by the coarse red and black ware. Structures exposed in this period were few and fragmentary, including a house consisting of a large room with verandah and two small rooms, all built of kiln-burnt bricks and raised on pebble and mortar foundations. The last period of occupation could be dated to the late medieval times when this part was under the control of the Muslims and Marathas.

The history of Mahishmati is, thus, traced through excavations which shed light on the life of the people and their habitations in different periods. The size of the largest room, 20 feet by 40 feet, shows that it might have been used for community purposes. Thick wooden posts, bamboo screens and kiln-burnt bricks provided the building material for the row of houses built in the flourishing period of the site's history of occupations. Pottery of different shapes, colour and texture, has something to tell about the life of the people. This ancient

city on the Narmada seems to have been one out of a chain of such sites in the Malwa region whose antiquity could be traced even to the pre-historic times.

Mathura

'HERAKLES is held in especial honour by the Sourasenoio, an Indian tribe who possess two large cities, Methora and Cleisbora', thus wrote Megasthenes, about this ancient city of the Surasenas and its association with Krishna. The other city is identified with Keshopura, while the Jobanes of the Greek historian is the river Yamuna. Krishna, Yamuna and Mathura are the three inseparable units connected with the legend of Lord Krishna of the Mahabharata fame which still retains its vitality and force, despite the passage of more than two thousand years. The Vaishnavites from the north and the south still consider it a celebrated centre of their pilgrimage, and bathing in the Yamuna purifies them from all their sins. This ancient city, the capital of the Surasenas, one of the sixteen Janapadas in the time of the Buddha, does not trace its foundation to the Vedic or to the later-Vedic times. It is suggested that Shatrughana, the youngest brother of Rama of the epic fame, founded this city after killing Madhu and Lavana.

The reference to the Vasudevakas by Panini, associated with this city, and the Surasenas and Mathura in the early Buddhist literature, prove conclusively that the city existed in the sixth century B.C. Its king at that time was Avantiputta who was probably related to the royal family of Ujjayini. There is no record of the Buddha staying here, although he did visit the city. Mahakachchana came here, and there were a number of Buddhists in this city. About 300 B.C., it became a Jain centre, a position

which it continued to occupy under the Kushanas and earlier under the Saka Kshatrapas, although both Brahmanism and Buddhism were equally popular here. It was attacked by the Indo-Greek ruler Menander and the *Milindapanha* also refers to it as one of the chief cities of India. Patanjali also mentions this place. It was connected with Sankissa (Sanskrit *Sankasya*), the capital of the southern Panchala. The distance between the two was only four Yojanas. This Uttara Madhura, the Madura of Ptolemy and the Methoras of Pliny, has been identified with Maholi five miles to the south-west of the present city. The Hindu kings of Mathura were finally displaced by the Saka Kshatrapas of Hagana and Hagamasa's family ending with Sodasa. The Kushanas' hold over the city continued for a much longer period than is generally assumed. It is very likely that it was the head-quarters of their empire in the east. In the time of Huvishka, a lord of Wakhana (Budakshan) came here on pilgrimage and set up perpetual endowments for the exclusive use of the Brahmins. The majority of inscriptions of this period are Jain in character, recorded on the statues of Tirthamkaras or on tablets of homage, the *Ayagapatas*. Brahmanical and Buddhist statues have also been found in abundance. The Nagas were ruling here before the coming of the Guptas to power. They were defeated and their territory was annexed to the Gupta empire by Samudragupta. An inscription of the time of Chandragupta II dated in the year 61 of the Gupta era refers to Saiva establishments of the Lakulisa sect in this city.

When Fa-hien visited this city he found it full of monks. Buddhism was growing. This city connected with the Krishna legend and the Bhagavata cult also produced Upagupta who had converted Asoka, to

Buddhism. Mathura was an important place for the Buddhists. The Buddhist monasteries and Deva temples connected with the adherents of the non-Buddhist sects were in conformity with the prevailing spirit of toleration and broad-mindedness in the city. At that time, there also existed three topes built by Asoka. Jainism was firmly entrenched in this city which was visited by Mahavira, and it was noted as the Siddhakshetra, a place for attaining perfection.

The later history of the city of Mathura is a record of vandalism and the unbending spirit of the people. The temples were destroyed by Mahmud Ghazni, and following the course of history, by Aurangzeb, but the religious zeal of the people in setting up structures, symbolising their devotion and faith was ever unabated. Here Surdas composed his devotional songs in praise of the god Krishna and his association with Radha. It thus became a centre of the *Bhakti* cult attracting devotees from different quarters, a position which it continues to enjoy even to this day.

Vast collections now stored in the local museum of archaeology, and at Lucknow, speak of the artistic traditions of this city which were built not by one dynasty, or in a century, but represent a blending of two streams emanating from the local genius, and that of Bharhut and Sanchi. Here the sculptors, unlike those of Gandhara, were more catholic and broad-minded, and they catered to the spiritual requirement of all religions—Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism alike. Statues of Nagas and Nagis, Yakshas and Yakshis, the guardians of the treasures underground, and of the four quarters respectively have also been found in large numbers in excavations.

The present city of Mathura does not appear to have

been built on the ruins of the old city. Maholi might represent one of the ancient sites. Katra, to the west of the Mathura city, an oblong enclosure measuring 804 feet in length by 653 feet in breadth, once housed the magnificent temple of Kesavadeva, which was pulled down by Aurangzeb; and bears traces of a Buddhist vihara. The famous Kankalitila, about a quarter of a mile to the south of the Bhuteswar mound, which yielded the largest number of Jain donatory records, also shows the remains of a great number of buildings. Besides these, other ancient sites which have yielded statues, terracottas, etc., include Pali khera, Anyor, Chhargaon and Parkhar in the extreme south, while Ganeshra and Maholi at a distance of some three miles west of the present Mathura city and still further west respectively. Jamalpur mound, to the south of the city, was the site of Huvishka's Vihara and in close proximity was another of Kanishka. The site of Mat, 9 miles north of the present city yielded the famous statue of Kanishka, besides another of a Kushana prince, and some more portrait statues. The famous inscription of the Kushanaputra Vema-takshama records the setting up of a temple along with a garden, a tank, a well and an assembly hall.

Mathura seems to be the richest archaeological site with a historical past. Excavations, casual, unscientifically planned and done in a haphazard way in the nineteenth century have yielded a rich crop of sculptures and terracottas—Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jain, with the result that a Mathura school of sculpture figures prominently in the history of Indian art. The extent of this ancient city was about 20 *li* in circuit, but it seems to have expanded in different directions. It withstood the onslaught of the iconoclasts from the time of Mahmud to

that of Aurangzeb. The present city continues to enjoy the patronage of pilgrims from all quarters, with its ancient past, religious sanctity and archaeological richness.

Nagarjunikonda–Vijayapuri

NAGARJUNIKONDA, six miles west of the Vijayapuri, now the site of the famous Nagarjunisagar Dam, in the Guntur district, was at one time the seat of the Krishna culture, which was linked with the famous Ikshvaku dynasty. Not claiming the metropolitan status of the Andhras or the Satavahanas—the honour shared by Pratishthana (Paithen) in the north and Amravati in the south, Nagarjunikonda, no doubt, boasted of its famous stupa with its nicely carved sculptures, the layout of the imposing edifices of the Ikshvakus living near the river at that time. Packed structures with the reddish brick foundations in bricks of large size with greenish limestone pillars spread over the area covering the remains of the old palace. The bathing ghat and the huge tank are all suggestive of the once flourishing city of Vijayapuri, of which Nagarjunikonda with its largest and most important Buddhist settlement might have been a part. The stupas, monasteries and temples are now represented by the ruins. Nagarjunikonda was the name given to the monastery on Sriparvata which was carved out for the greatest of the Buddhist philosophers who formulated the Madhyamika or the middle path of reconciliation between realism and nihilism. It symbolised not only the Buddhist establishments noticed later on by the Chinese pilgrims, but also seems to have represented ancient Vijayapuri—the city of victory—associated with the Ikshvakus, once the feudatories of the Satavahanas. To the south-west of this country (Dakshina Kosala)

above 300 *li* from the capital was a mountain called Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li (Skt. Brahmagiri) which rose lofty and compact like a single rock. Here King Sadvaha (Satavahana) had quarried for Nagarjuna a monastery in the mountain, writes Hiuen-tsang. Earlier, Fa-hien too refers to the hewing out, from a large hill of rock in a country named Dakshina, a monastery which consisted of five storeys. Nagarjunikonda had become a centre of attraction not only for the votaries of Buddhism from India, but it even drew pilgrims from abroad. The Mahayana phase of Buddhism was radiated from this place. There is a little account of the history of this place. Inscriptions recorded on the pillars found in the course of trial excavations and systematic digging of the site to unearth the entire buried past before it is submerged in the dam, have something to tell about the benefactions made here, its architecture and above all, sculptures which follow the tradition of Amravati.

The stupas of many sizes from little mounds to the Mahachetiya, now preserved only in ruins, were nearly all of one design—a brick casing of a drum or vedika, covered by the umbrella of a dome with projecting rectangular altars at the four cardinal points. Each altar was adorned by a group of five votive pillars symbolising the five principal events in Buddha's life. The dome was probably topped by the harmika—the rectangular god's house. The ornamentation of the stupa was in stone and stucco. Monuments unearthed in excavations include the Mahachetiya, the Aparamahavinaseliya vihara, the Bahusrutiya vihara, Chuladhammagiri vihara, Mahisasaka vihara, and the campus—supposed to be of a seat of learning. The existence of a temple of Hariti, the Buddhist mother goddess, on the slope of a

hill was also exposed. Behind this temple, another shrine of greater proportions, a structure in two phases of the post-Ikshvaku period, was also uncovered. Besides the Buddhist structures, traces of Hindu temples have also been found. The closely packed structures lining the river include the Pushpabhadrasvami and the Karttikeya temples. The former was built at the top of a bathing ghat on the western slope of the hill, while a little distance away the other temple was built, according to the inscriptions, during the time of Ehuvala Chantamula. Fire altars and the tanks for ceremonial baths—one having two descending flights of steps running on either side provided with elaborate drainage—were also exposed. Pillared halls meant for congregation or assembly of people have also been excavated.

Excellent sculptural specimens, such as the Yaksha pairs or the Mithuna couples, narratives of the life of the Buddha, and Jataka stories supply a valuable index to the social life of the times and the art of the Krishna region displayed at the service of religion. These sculptures carved in bas-relief include the Buddha's descent from the Tushita heaven, the gods exhorting the Buddha to proclaim the Dharma, the Buddha's nativity, the great renunciation of prince Siddhartha himself riding on the horse Kanthaka with the hooves borne up by the devas, on the same pattern as in Gandhara art with the prince giving away his jewels. The *Mahaparinirvana* or 'the death of the Lord' is represented by the stupa. Several Jataka stories, and the visit of Ajatsatru to the Buddha are depicted here, besides several motifs including the 'purnaghata' or the vessel of plenty. The Mithuna couples in sporting postures, not erotic in form, figure prominently. The antiquities from Nagarjunikonda are

now housed in a local museum set up near the site.

The site of Nagarjunikonda, associated with the Ikshavaku kings and the Buddhist philosopher after whom it is so called, is to have a burial now in the deep waters of the dam named after it. Its relics alone have something to tell about its antiquity as a Buddhist site, while the inscriptions shed some light on the history of the dynasty ruling here, and furnish names of the benefactors who participated in pious acts of dedication.

Pragjyotishpur

PRAGJYOTISHPUR, identified by Gait with Gauhati in Assam, symbolises the capital of the ancient country also known as Kamarupa. The name Pragjyotisha stands for a well-known people mentioned in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. According to the *Kalikapurana*, the beautiful city under the sovereignty of Naraka was looked upon as India's mansion by the neighbouring ruler of Videha. Bhagadatta, the ruler of this place, is said to have taken part in the famous Bharata war. Bordering on the realm of the Kiratas and Chinas, the kingdom of Pragjyotish and its capital seem to have been a meeting ground of men of different nationalities. The Chinese explorer Chang-kien notices the highway between India and China passing through this region. Enterprising Indians seem to have trekked on it to the land of the eastern El Dorado—the Suvarnabhumi in the far east. The list of costly jewels sent by the ruler of this place Bhaskarvarman through an emissary, prince Kumara, to Harsha is mentioned by Bana. The poet also refers to the richness of the country and its capital, while the craftsmanship of its skilful artists is evinced by the smooth-figured textures and other items. Pragjyotisha is also mentioned by Varahamihira among the countries in the east, while its location is settled to the north of the Brahmaputra river, according to the *Raghuvamsa* of Kalidasa. It is also mentioned by Bana with reference to the despatch of an ambassador by the ruler of this place to Harsha. Rajasekhara in his *Kavyamimamsa* places

the country of Pragjyotisha in the east.

Pragjyotisha and Kamarupa are noticed together in the *Abhidhanachintamani* of Hemachandra. Kamarupa is mentioned by Samudragupta in his Allahabad pillar inscription as one of the frontier states outside his empire, and paying tribute to him. One late inscription defines the administrative relation between Kamarupa and Pragjyotisha. It refers to the former as a *mandala* and the latter as a *vishaya*—the latter certainly a bigger administrative unit. According to the Puranas, Kamarupa extended from the Karatoya river eastwards, and its capital was Pragjyotisha. Kia-mo-leu-po or Kamarupa, according to Hiuen-tsang, was 10,000 *li* or 1667 miles in circuit. Despite the casual reference to the administrative greatness of Pragjyotisha, it appears that Kamarupa symbolised the country while Pragjyotisha, its capital, seems rightly identified with Gauhati. Here stands the Kamakhya temple noted for its antiquity. One inscription refers to the city of Pragjyotisha as impregnable, but the weakness of the ruler of Kamarupa invited outside adventurists. King Lalitaditya Muktapida is said to have over-run Kamarupa in A.D. 724, while Devapala of the Pala dynasty in Bengal had little difficulty in conquering it. The dominion was included in the empire of the Pala Kings of Bengal. The Ahoms of the Shan tribe established their authority over Kamarupa early in the 13th century, and their rule lasted till the year 1816—followed by the British occupation. Much earlier, Bakhtiar Khilji's attempt to conquer it proved abortive and he was forced to retreat.

This is the history of Kamarupa and Pragjyotishpur, the latter symbolising the capital of the former, although they are sometimes considered identical. At other times

they were two administrative units—one bigger than the other. Gauhati, supposd to represent the ancient city of Pragjyotishpur, can still claim to be a town of antiquity and importance with the famous temple of Kamakhya located near by.

Prayaga

PRAYAGA, the ancient name of Allahabad, sanctified by the great sacrifice performed by Prajapati, after whom the place seems to be named, is situated near the confluence of the two rivers, the Ganga and the Yamuna, and the invisible Sarasvati. It might not have an ancient political past, but its religious importance can be traced to much earlier times. In the *Ramayana* it is referred to as a forest area, with the hermitage of sage Bharadvaja located there. It was the first halting place of Rama while going in exile. In the *Mahabharata*, Yudhishtira is advised by sage Markandeya to proceed to Prayaga for attaining peace of mind and freedom from sin after the famous Bharata war. The sanctity of this place could be traced to a *khila* of the *Rigveda* which refers to people bathing at the confluence of the white and the black rivers—the Ganga and the Yamuna—going to heaven, while those of firm mind giving up their bodies there attaining immortality. The *Mahabharata* calls it the holiest of all places, and its Punyakshetra—the holy region—figures in the *Harivamsa* and also in the *Bhagavata Purana*. The *Matsya* describes its limits—to the east of the Ganges from Pratishthana to the pool of Vasuki in the north, and from the Kambala and Asvatara Nagas in the west to Bahumulaka in the south. Prayaga Mandala is described as a large area within a radius of one and a half *yojanas* round the Brahma Yupa or sacrificial post.

The political history of this place is shrouded in mystery. In the sixth century B. C., Kausambi was the

capital. Payaga, Payagatittha or Payagapatitthana was only a fort on the Ganges on the direct route from Veranja to Varanasi. It was on the river ghats that people did ceremonial bathing. The Buddha had passed it. From the time of the Mauryas to the end of the Kushanas the place hardly figured as an important city. According to the Puranas, the boundaries of the early Guptas extended upto this place. It is also mentioned in several inscriptions. Samudragupta's conquests are annaled in the famous inscription of Asoka, now in the Allahabad fort. Some inscriptions from Bhita not far from Prayaga, mention Mahraraja Gautmiputra Sri Sivamegha, Rajan Vasishthaputra Bhimasena, and Maharaja Gautamiputra Vrishadhvaja. The distinct series of coins found at Kausambi suggest that the rulers there formed a group or groups whose kingdom extended beyond that region and included Prayaga. The Gupta king Kumaragupta, after his victory over the Maukhari ruler Isanavarman, performed a religious sacrifice at Prayaga. The Chinese pilgrim describes the location of this city. According to him, it was situated at the confluence of the two rivers, and to the west of a large sandy plain. In the midst of the city was a Brahmanical temple to which presentation of a single piece of money procured as much merit as that of one thousand pieces elsewhere. He also refers to the sacrifices of their lives by the pilgrims before the temple, a practice which had been observed from times immemorial. The temple is situated inside the fort of Allahabad due north from the pillar of Asoka and Samudragupta. That must have been the site of the old Prayaga. Harsha's assemblies at Prayaga, every five years, speak of the religious sanctity of the place and the benevolent attitude of the Emperor.

The place was in the possession of the Gurjara-Pratihara rulers of Kanauj, but later on it passed into the hands of the Chandela ruler Dhanaga who is reported to have abandoned his body in the holy waters of the Jahnavi (Ganga) and Kalindi (Yamuna). Later on, it was in the possession of the Gahadavalas of Kanauj, and king Jayachandra took his bath here. Kara, not far from Allahabad, witnessed the tragedy of Alauddin killing his uncle there. The old city of Prayaga seems to have been abandoned or deserted, for we find the foundation of the fort of Illahabas on the ancient site of the city in the twenty-first year of Akbar's reign. The city of Prayaga has not been noticed by Mohammadan historians, probably because of its desertion till the foundation of the new city in the time of Akbar.

Pushkalavati

SEVENTEEN miles north-east of Peshawar, now in Pakistan, lies the ancient city of Pushkalavati, the capital of Astes who exhibited his pride and patriotism in offering a stiff resistance to Alexander and died a martyr's death. It is now represented by a huge mound of great height at Charsadda. The Peukelaotis of Arrian, the Proklais of Ptolemy, this ancient capital of Gandhara, according to the *Vishnu Purana*, was founded by Pushkara, son of Bharata, and nephew of Rama of the Epic fame. Arrian describes Peukelas as a very large and populous city lying near the Indus, and the capital of a prince named Astes. Ptolemy locates its position correctly on the eastern bank of the river Souastene (Swat), while, according to the *Periplus*, it traded in spikenard of various kinds, and in costus and bdellium which it received from adjacent countries for despatch to the coast of India. The *Markandeya Purana* mentions the people of this region as Pushkalas. After the Greeks it came under the hold of the succeeding dynasties. It formed part of the kingdom of Maues, the Saka, while according to Taranatha, Kanishka used to live here. The place is also mentioned in the *Brihat-samhita*. It is not known when the city met its final end. On leaving Parshawar or Peshawar, the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-tsang travelled towards the north-east for 100 *li*, or nearly 17 miles, and crossing a great river, reached Pu-se-kia-lo-fa-ti or Pushkalavati. A large stupa or solid tower marked the spot where the Buddha was said to have made an alms-offering of his eyes.

Nature seems to have taken full control of the site. The fort of Hisar stood on a mound above the ruins of the ancient city, and so it is also known as Bala Hisar.

For a long time the place did not engage the attention of archaeologists, although the importance of the site was realized and it was expected that excavation here would yield the occupation of the site for a fairly long time. It was in 1958, that the place was excavated by the Department of Archaeology of the Government of Pakistan under the direction of Sir Mortimer Wheeler. The site of the ancient city standing by the Kabul river at the end of the route through the Hindu Kush to Central Asia was the focal point. Since Bala Hisar was the highest mound, it was skilfully tackled. The excavation comprised four main trenches : a great cut through nearly 18 metres of the Bala Hisar mound ; a deep and interesting cut into the silted deposits of an ancient river bed about 92 metres to the east ; and two cuts on the edge of the lower mound lying beyond the river bed. The cuttings in the mound revealed the occupation of the site for several centuries, with many super-imposed levels of brick house walls. The immense height of the mound remains inexplicable when compared with the contemporary site of Bhir mound at Taxila. Unfortunately, only one type of coins of Menader was found here. A series of pottery forms alone provide the sequence chronology of the site, while considerable series of terracotta figurines supply stratigraphic confirmation. According to Sir Mortimer Wheeler, the earliest levels might well date to the period of the first Achaemenian influence in Gandhara. The invasion of Alexander and the historic siege of Pushkalavati may be evident from the evidence of a temporary defensive ditch which forms the second point in the history of the site.

Two further points are represented by the importation of the North Black Polished Ware and the flowering of the Gandhara school of sculpture. The site has, however, not yielded as fruitful results as were expected.

Rajgir

POPULARLY described by sister Nivedita as 'an ancient Babylon', Rajgir, surrounded by the five hills, with hot springs running in its bosom and frequented by the Buddhist and Jain pilgrims alike, can trace its antiquity to a time when Babylon and Phoenicia and old Egypt and Sheba were living and important. The theatre-like valley encircled by the streams was the capital of the famous ruler Jarasandha of the epic fame whose duel with Bhima is portrayed in the local legends. It is supposed by the people of this place to have taken place at a site in Rajgir known as Ranabhumi for twenty-eight days before the mighty ruler was overpowered and killed by the Pandava adversary. This ancient city was the metropolis of the rulers of the Baimbaka family, Bimbisara and Ajatsatru before the transference of the capital to Pataliputra. It was done for strategic reasons to repel the attacks of the Vajjis from the other side of the Ganges. The place could still boast of its sanctity—being frequented by that Sakyan youth Gautama. After enlightenment Buddha came to this place, time and again as an honoured guest of his friend and devotee Bimbisara. It was at the famous Griddhakuta, the peak of enlightenment, that he had his solitary sojourn. With the storm of compassion broken loose within him for the suffering humanity, this Messiah had a message of solace for the people. Ajatsatru, the son and successor of Bimbisara, had starved his father to death, and it was here that his father-in-law Prasenajit of Kosala driven away

by his son Vidudabha, sought refuge only to die at its gates which were closed at night. Of the two capitals the earlier one, known as old Rajgir, was to the southern side, while Ajatsatru had built his new city to the north of it. Remnants of the two sites have been exposed through the spade of the archaeologists. The pre-historic cyclopean walls running round the crest of the hills encircling the city and extending over a length of about twenty-five to thirty miles are the oldest remains of the city. Built of massive undressed stones three to five feet in length and closely bonded together without the use of mortar or cement, with bastions attached to the outside of the walls, wherever necessary, they are reminiscent of the ancient experiment in fortification. Traces of an inner city wall are also noticed in a perimeter of between four to five miles.

A systematic study of the ancient monuments in Rajgir —including the famous Saptapanniguha, where the first Buddhist council was held after the death of Buddha, the famous Sonabhandar, Maniyar Matha, Pippala stonehouse, besides those spots excavated earlier or in not very distant past, may not be out of place in the general context of the history and antiquity of this place. The Pippala stonehouse on the Vibhara hill is also called Jarasandha-ki-Baithaka ; from here climbing still further to the modern temple of Mahadeva, and then past the Jain temple, a narrow path leads a hundred feet below to the famous Saptapanniguha. Here the first Buddhist council under Mahakassapa was held. Ajatsatru had extended his patronage to this Buddhist convention. Outside the hills to the north lies the Venuvana which was given as a gift by Bimbisara to the Buddha. Excavations in this area brought to light several stupas and

sculptures, some dating to the tenth or eleventh century A.D. To the east of the Venuvana, the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-tsang noticed a stupa built by Ajatsatru, which might be represented by one of the mounds in this area.

In the valley itself, less than a mile from the northern gate, a footpath leads to a cylindrical brick structure now protected from nature through iron-corrugated sheets. It is known as Maniyar Math—a small Jain shrine of a later period on the top of the Buddhist stupa. Cunningham's attempt to sink a shaft and reach the bottom without disturbing the then surface monument rewarded him with three small figures. These include one of Maya lying on a couch with the ascetic Buddha portrayed above, and that of a naked standing figure with a seven-headed serpent hood, symbolising the Jain Tirthankar Parsvanatha. Later excavations by Bloch after demolishing the surface shrine exposed a massive brick structure with stucco-figures, well-preserved around the base. The images, not very high, include a four-armed Banasura, Nagis and Nagas, Ganesa and Siva. These seem to have been of the Gupta period. It is suggested that the place was symbolic of Naga or serpent worship associated with Maninaga. It seems to have been enlarged several times, with Brahmanical images on the stucco model in the later Gupta period.

Sonabhandar—a group of two caves to the north of the Maniyar Math, excavated in the southern scrap of the Vaibhara hill—was not the home of treasured gold, but a set of Jain caves excavated in the third or fourth century A.D. by some Jain ascetic. The images of Jain Tirthamkaras appear on the walls of one of them. The fine image of Vishnu riding on Garuda, belonging to the Gupta period, was also found in one of the caves. The square

mortice-holes in the face of the rock are suggestive of the wooden planks used for the hanging balcony.

The eminent physician of Rajagriha—Jivaka, who had his training at Taxila, probably erected a monastery for the Buddha, and his famous grove site was recently excavated. According to the Pali texts, it was situated somewhere between the eastern gate and the Griddhakuta. Several elliptical halls, perhaps part of the old monastery, were exposed in excavations. The embankment of a large reservoir identified with ancient Sumagadha was also traced to the south of the road to Griddhakuta.

Isolated areas excavated in Rajgir suggest several periods of habitation at a particular site cut by a rivulet : the dull red sherds, followed by a clear deposit of North-Black polished sherds, and finally the absence of this N.B.P. ware. Excavations at the ramparts of the new Rajagriha suggest three successive periods of occupation with interesting details still to come.

Such is ancient Rajgir—one of the six chief cities of the time of the Buddha. Various important routes passed through it. It was connected with Takkasila (Taxila) through Savatthi (Sravasti), and Kapilvatthu (Kapilavastu). From this place to the Ganges was a distance of five leagues. The Buddhist literature also mentions the distance between Rajgir and other cities of importance. At the time of the Buddha's death there were eighteen large monasteries here. In the city was a Potter's Hall where travellers from far off distances spent the night, since the gates were closed, and it was impossible to enter the city. In Buddha's time, Rajgir had a population of eighteen crores, nine in the city and nine outside. This might be an exaggeration, but certainly the place was well-populated with sanitary condi-

tions not very good. The people of this place, like most of the ancient cities, had regular festivals, and troops of entertainers also visited the capital from outside.

The decline of the city in importance and prosperity followed the transference of the capital to Pataliputra. When Fa-hien visited it early in the fifth century A.D. emptiness and desolation ruled over the place. Hiuen-tsang, a few centuries later, also found it in a dilapidated condition with Brahmins living there. For a long time, it continued to be a centre of Buddhist activity. Its cosmopolitan character, being associated with Mahavira who spent several rainy seasons here, and the birth-place of Munisuvrata, the twentieth Tirthamkara, was never disturbed. The place still continues to attract votaries of different faiths, charmed by its natural beauty, hot springs, and the hoary past associations with both Buddhism and Jainism.

Rupar

RUPAR situated on the left bank of the river Sutlej in the Ambala district does not figure anywhere in ancient Indian literature as an ancient city, but archaeological excavations at the site in the early fifties of this century have exposed the remains of an ancient city dating back to the period of the Harappan times. The Harappans were the first settlers here and the city continued to be in occupation till the seventh century A.D., with changing colours of fortune. Six periods have been identified at Rupar. The first two periods cover the Harappa and the Painted Grey ware cultures before the historical times. The remains of the Harappa culture are tentatively dated between circa 2000-1400 B.C. Thin fluviatile deposits of sand and pebbles underlie almost the characteristic Harappan pottery, beads, bronze celts, chert blades, faience ornaments, terracotta cakes, and an inscribed steatite seal. The layout of the city and the method of burning the dead are properly exposed here. A low mound about 160 feet to the west of the main habitation represents the burial place of the people. It gives an idea of the method of doing so, despite considerable disturbance in that area by the people of the Painted Grey ware culture. The dead body was laid in a pit generally with the head towards the north-west. It was about 2 feet deep. Pots, as usual, were placed with the body, their numbers, however, varying with personal ornaments. Circumstances responsible for bringing the Harappans to this place are not known, but the site

seems to have been deserted till it was reoccupied about 1000 B.C. by a people of different stock and tradition who used the characteristic Painted Grey ware—noticed at several other places in Western U.P. and Rajasthan. These people used typical pottery including the black slipped ware, beads, and bangles of terracotta, semi-precious stones, glass and bone. Copper implements have also been found, and so also glass for the first time. There is little evidence of their houses, but reeds seem to have been used as the material in walls and roofs.

About the sixth century B.C., when there were several important cities in the Ganga-Yamuna doab, a new settlement sprang up at Rupar with a coarse grey pottery associated with the usual North Black Polished ware and plain red ware. These historical levels in this period from 6th to the 2nd century B.C. yielded Punch-marked and uninscribed cast coins, copper and iron implements and an ivory seal inscribed in Mauryan Brahmi characters. The craftsmanship of the Mauryan period with fine polish, as we find on the Asokan columns, is visible on a small scale on a disc minutely carved with figures and motifs associated with the fertility cult. Houses of mud and kiln-burnt bricks, and a burnt brick wall 36 m. in width was traced to a distance of 75 m. Soak-wells lined with terracotta rings were also found in this historical period at Rupar.

The period from the Sungas to the end of the Guptas—a little over 700 years—covers several successive levels and datable objects including Indo-Greek, tribal and Kushana. Gupta coins have also been found. Terracotta figures, associated with these three periods of ancient Indian history, showing the craftsmanship of the artists, have been found. The upper date is fixed

by the number of terracotta sealings in characters of the fourth-fifth centuries. The pottery is mostly red. Traces of fairly rich dwellings with houses of stone and mud bricks are found in the three periods of occupation.

With the end of the Gupta rule, Rupar seems to have witnessed a new phase of occupation lasting from the sixth to the ninth centuries A.D. Coins of Mihirakula, Toramana, and the Huna rulers have been found in this period with the spacious brick buildings confined to the southern part of the site. The last phase of occupation at Rupar begins from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries A.D. with the pre-Mughal glazed ware and Lakhauri bricks and Muslim coins which were found in top fillings as well.

Rupar is not the only place in the Punjab with traces of Harappan culture ; 2 kilometres south-east of it, Kotla Mhang Khan was also a small Harappan settlement ; but it is supposed to be the earlier one while Rupar represents the later one. Another site 8 kilometres south of Rupar, named Bara, appears to be a later settlement. The pre-Harappan phase is absent both at Rupar and at Bara, although that type of pottery is noticable at a place called Kalibanga in the Ganganagar district of Rajasthan, on the left bank of the Ghaggar. Rupar might have been founded by the Harappans who seem to have entered the Sutlej valley along the Sarasvati over the dried-up land. They were overcome by the Painted Grey ware people. This pre-historic phase covering the first two periods of Rupar history is based on the pottery types. It is a pity that even for the historic periods we have to depend only on the archaeological finds, as literature is completely silent. Nevertheless, Rupar's antiquity as an ancient town is well-established.

Sisupalagarh

SISUPALAGARH near Bhuvaneshwar is supposed to represent the ancient city of Tosali—the capital of the eastern portion of Asoka's empire—or Kalinganagara which figures so prominently in the inscription of Kharavela, as well as in several other records. Kharavela is described in his own record as 'Kalingadhipati'. Kalinganagara was his capital where he repaired the buildings, walls, and gates, and raised the embankments of the Isitale tank and restored all the damaged gardens. The face lifting of the city was done after the damage caused by the stormy wind. Sisupalagarh or the Sisupalagarhi, named after a village Sisupala located in the eastern sector of the fort itself, seems to satisfy the claim of an ancient city because of its proximity with the Khandagiri-Udayagiri hills. It is also the only fortified town of those times. Excavations here also reveal a collapse and subsequent repair of the southern gateway-flank of the fortification. These are only circumstantial pieces of evidence for the identification of the present site located about 1½ miles to the east-south-east of the town of Bhuvaneshwar, with the ancient Kalinganagara. On the presumption of this supposed identification the antiquity of the ancient capital of Kalinga might be traced in literature and inscriptions, while the archaeological excavation at the site of Sisupalagarh could shed light on the layout of the town, its rise, culmination and decline.

Kalinga is mentioned both by Panini and Patanjali. Lying on the eastern coast of India between the Mahanadi

and the Godavari, it seems to have comprised the present State of Orissa as far as Vizigapatam. The *Matsya Purana* extends it as far as the Amara-Kantaka hills which might have been an error. According to the *Mahavastu* its capital was Dantapur from very early times, but two eastern Ganga copper plate grants refer to Kalinganagara which has been variously located at Kalingapatam or Mukhalingam near Chicacole. Many early Ganga Kings, as Lords of Kalinga, issued their grants from the various camps at Kalinganagara. It may, therefore, be proposed that the capital of Kalinga was located at different places, and the metropolis of this State could as well be Sisupalgarh for some time—then designated as Kalinganagar. Excavations here were conducted by the Archaeological Department of the Government of India.

The excavations have revealed that the site was occupied from the beginning of the third century B.C. to the middle of the fourth century A.D., with one integral culture throughout the period showing, of course, gradual changes. The first period of habitation could be placed between c. 300–200 B.C., the second period with its earlier phase from about 200 B.C.–A.D. 100, followed by the later phase from c. A.D. 100–200, and the third and the last period from c. 200–350 A.D. The earlier period (No. I) is supposed to represent the formative stage of the local culture which matured through gradual evolution in the first phase of the next period. The pottery of the first period is essentially plain, without any decorations. It is largely wheel-turned varying in colour from dull-grey to burnt red. No structural remains were encountered in this period, nor were the finds many, because of the limited scope of excavation.

During this period there were no defences.

The Early middle period saw the local culture in its full bloom. With advance in industry, pottery gets sophisticated with certain evolved types. Incised and applied decorative patterns are used for the first time at the beginning of this period; the black-and-red ware of the megalithic fabric appears, and further up the earliest specimen of the rouletted ware was also found. Terracotta ear-ornaments, iron implements, and beads of agate, carnelian quartz etc., were recovered from various levels of this period. At four different levels structures of large chiselled laterite blocks were encountered without unfolding the plans. With the late levels of this period was associated a pottery ring-well, 1½ feet in diameter, which continued to be used in the following sub-period, II B. Defences begin to be constructed in the first part of the Second period. In Phase I, they consisted of a clay-rampart, some 25 feet high and over 110 feet wide at the base. In Phase II of the Defences a 4–6 feet thick covering of laterite gravel was added on to the top of the clay-rampart. In the later phases the clay-filling was retained by baked brick revetments on either side. On the top of the rampart wall were noticed a series of roughly circular holes, each about a foot deep and 10 inches wide, arranged at regular intervals. The defences at Sisupalgarh were set up some where in the first quarter of the second century B.C. The fort had eight large gateways, two on each side.

The late middle period from A.D. 100–200 shows the decline of the local culture with the pottery ware changing from bright-red polished slip to ochre-wash, and three specimens of Northern Black Polished ware were also found. Besides the objects of the earlier period, some glass bangles were also found along with terracotta animal figures and

human heads, imitated from those of Roman coins. In the late period the bright-red polished ware is changed to red or yellowish-red ochre-wash. Change is also noticed in the layout of the structures, but the majority of the pottery-types and decorative patterns remain unchanged, as also the terracotta ear-ornaments, iron implements, beads, etc. The change in the layout might at best suggest a break in the occupation which might not be extending to the whole area, but only in a restricted degree. Only two adjoining houses, built of laterite blocks and lying north to south, were exposed in excavation with a two-foot wide space separating them.

The evidence from the restricted area of excavation pieced together includes the rouletted ware, the black-and-red ware, a coin of Huvishka, a gold coin imitating the Kushana type, and Puri-Kushana coins. The rouletted ware shows resemblance to the Arikamedu finds of similar pottery ware and the earliest specimens at Sisupalagarh are assigned to about 50 A.D. The uppermost limit of the site is determined by the presence of the so-called Puri-Kushana coins. These are assigned to about the middle of the fourth century A.D. It is difficult to suggest how the city met its end, since there is no evidence of its occupation after the fourth century A.D. It is very likely that the metropolis of Kalinga might have been shifted further south. This well-fortified city with its houses built of bricks or cut-laterite slabs, streets possibly laid on a chess-board pattern, massive arrange-ment with outer and inner doorways, did not have a long history of occupation for reasons which remain enveloped under the debris of the still unexcavated area.

Sravasti

Sravasti, known to the Buddhists as Savatthi, one of the six ancient cities in the time of the Buddha, is now represented by Saheth-Maheth, lying on the borders of Gonda and Bahraich districts on the road from Gonda towards Ekona. Five miles from the latter, there is a fine rest-house from where a small road bifurcates towards the east, and at a distance of more than a kilometre lie the ruins of the old city. Here the famous merchant Anathpindika had the foundations of the Jetavana vihara filled with golden pieces. The city was named after the sage Savatha, according to Buddhaghosha. At first a religious settlement, it grew up very soon, since everything was found here. Thus, the place came to be known as Savatthi. Another version is given in the *Vishnu-Purana*, according to which it is said to have been built by king Sravasta or a Sravastaka, son of Yuvanasva. The later Sanskrit literature—the *Harshacharita* and the *Kathasaritsagara* also mention some of its rulers, suggesting that the city continued to prosper, a fact confirmed by the Pratihara records as well.

Situated on the banks of Achiravati, the city of Rapti had its political and religious importance, while the commercial one was not lost sight of. As the capital of Kosala—the powerful house of Prasenajita and his son Vidudabha—it was connected with Rajgir and Vaisali in the east, and Ayodhya (Saket) and Kausambi in the south-west. It was even linked with Takkasila (Taxila) through Sankassa (Sankisa), at distances of a hundred and forty-

seven and thirty leagues respectively. Merchants from this place covered a distance of one hundred and twenty leagues in company to reach Supparaka (Sopara) from where they sailed over-seas with their merchandise. The *Divyavadana* mentions the story of a thousand merchant-traders, popularly called *vanika* moving in company under the leadership of the caravan traders' chief known as *Sarthavahajethaka*. Savathi is closely associated with the life of the Buddha. Here he spent the greatest part of his monastic life, exhibiting his supernatural powers as depicted in sculptures, like the miracle of Sravasti. It is said that he spent twenty-five rainy seasons—nineteen in the Jetavana and six in the Pubbarama monasteries. Opposite the Jetavana, Pasenadi (Prasenajit) had built the monastery of Rajakarama. The chief patrons of Buddh-ism in the city of Savatthi were, besides Anantha-pindika, Visakha, Suppavasa and Pasenadi, the old ruler, and Bandhula of Vaisali. At that time, according to Buddha-ghosha, there were fifty-seven thousand families in this main city of the country of Kasi-Kosala which had eighty thousand villages in an area of three hundred leagues.

The city had attraction for the Brahmins and Jains too. It had an important Brahmanical institution under Janussomi. To the Jains it was known as Chandrapuri, or Chandrikapuri, and was the birth-place of Sambha-vanatha and Chandraprabhanatha—the two famous Tirthamkaras. A Chaitya adorned with the image of Sri Sambhanatha graced this city. Kapila came here for acquiring knowledge, and Bhadra of a royal family became a monk here in the course of wanderings, ulti-mately attaining perfection. Mahavira, too, had visited it several times, meeting the Ajivika Gosala—Makkhali-putra—after they had parted company. It was also a

meeting ground of ascetics of other minor religious orders—the Jatilas, Niganthas and Parivrajakas. Religious discourses from the mouth of the Buddha and other religious thinkers were well received by the people of this place which included a large number of monks and nuns.

Its importance under the Mauryas and the Sungas is not brought out by the records, but in the Kushana period it figures in the record of Bhikshu Bala who had set up a large statue of the Bodhisattva, similar to the one set up at Sarnath. Sculptors were especially invited here from Mathura for making beautiful images. Its flourishing condition and economic prosperity are brought out from the *Divyavadana* which mentions its enterprising merchants proceeding overseas from Sopara.

Fa-hien and Hiuen-tsang have noticed this place. The former describes its population as very inconsiderable in A.D. 400. The Ceylonese annals speak of Khiradhara, king of Savathipura between A.D. 275 and 302. It was a dependency of the Guptas. Saketa or Ayodhya is specifically mentioned in the *Vayu Purana* within the ambit of the Gupta Empire. The decline of the city seems to have been gradual. According to Hiuen-tsang, a king of this place named Vikramaditya became a persecutor of Buddhists. The author of the *Vibhasasutra,* Manohara, being humiliated by the Brahmins here, committed suicide. Hiuen-tsang assigns to the kingdom of Sravasti a circuit of 4000 *li* or 667 miles, probably comprising a much larger area than actually covered by this kingdom. It was then in ruins, but there were some inhabitants. Good crops and a healthy climate were noticed by the Chinese pilgrim who found the people honest in their ways and fond of good works. It was a seat of learning with some hundreds of Buddhist monas-

teries a good many then in ruins. There were some *deva* temples and the non-Buddhists were numerous. The adherents of Mahayanism dominated in Buddhist monasteries. The famous one of Jetavana continued to be the centre of attraction even till a much later period.

Despite the set-back to Sravasti's political, cultural and religious life in the post-Gupta and early medieval period, its strategic importance was not lost sight of. Under the Gurjara-Pratiharas it was an important administrative unit styled both as a *bhukti* and a *mandala*, *viz.*, a division and a district. Earlier in the time of Harsha, it is mentioned in his Madhuban copper plate inscription as a division. It seems to have continued in that capacity under the Gahadavalas. From the twelfth century onwards it was reduced to a mere village, probably with some Buddhist and Brahmanical establishments. It remained isolated and desolated till the archaeologists uncovered its buried past and exposed some stupas and monasteries.

Cunningham in 1863–1876, was followed by Marshall and his team who carried on systematic excavations from 1908-11 with the purpose of tracing the lay-out of the city and its monuments. The Stupa of Sudatta, the minister of Prasenajit, with its height of about 25 feet and another one known as the 'finger-garland,' named after the person who used to cut the finger of someone everyday and make a garland out of it till he came under Buddha's influence and became a convert to Buddhism, with a height of 35 feet, are noteworthy. Another mound to the south-west is named after Sovnatha where some traces of a Jain temple and a few images were found. The site of the famous Jetavana is half a mile to the south-west of the city area, and further to its south-west lies another mound

which is about 70 feet high. The statues recovered in excavations are mainly Buddhist ; a few Jain and Brahmanical ones are made of red sandstone from Mathura. The most important one is that of Kubera and Avalokitesvara of the Gupta period. A few statues of the twelfth century along with coins have also been found.

Sravasti continues to be a centre of pilgrimage for the Buddhist pilgrims from the Far-East, and one of attraction to the tourists. To the local people it is still a village with a glorious past. It was at one time the metropolis of Kosala, the place of Buddha's sojourn for a total period of about twenty-five years in intervals, an administrative division under Harsha and the Pratihara rulers of Kanauj, a seat of Brahmanical learning and Buddhist monasteries. It might not have a future but it can certainly boast of its past.

Tamralipti

THE sea-port of embarkation for the banished princess, enterprising merchants and devoted missionaries to South-east Asia, Tamralipti mentioned under different names—Damatipta, Tamralipti or Tamraliptika in literature and itineraries of the Chinese pilgrims is now represented by Tamluk in the Midnapur district of Bengal, about 12 miles from the junction of the Rupnarayana with the Hooghly. This ancient city is mentioned in the *Mahabharata* which distinguishes it from Suhma. In the Pali literature it is mentioned as Tamalitti or Tamalitthi, the port from which the branch of the Bodhi tree was sent to Ceylon by Asoka. Ptolemy calls it Tamalites. In the *Raghuvamsa*, its location is fixed on the bank of river Kapisa, while Dandin in his *Dasakumaracharita* refers to the temple of Binduvasini here which was visited by the Chinese pilgrims. Fa-hien describes its situation on the sea-side, 50 *yojanas* east from Champa. From here he sailed for Ceylon. According to Hiuen-tsang, the kingdom of Tan-mo-li-ti or Tamralipti was 1400 to 1500 *li*, about 250 miles in circuit. It was situated on the sea shore, and the surface of the country was low and wet. The capital was in a bay, and was accessible both by land, and by water. The place was noted as a trading centre. The *Kathasaritasagara* notices its importance as a maritime port and an emporium of commerce from the fourth to the twelfth centuries A.D. One inscription mentions three brothers from Ayodhya who went to Tamralipti for trade and made plenty of

money. The place had a few temples and Buddhist monasteries. I-tsing stayed in the famous monastery called Baraha, while Hiuen-tsang also noticed some sangharamas and deva temples. The Puranas refer to some temples, one such being that of Bargabhina, mentioned in the *Brahma Purana*. The place is also mentioned in the *Prajnapana*—a Jaina canonical text.

Surface indications, the finds of silver and copper punch-marked and rectangular cast coins, terracotta figurines, and ancient pottery, were picked up at this site from time to time, and a few trial trenches were sunk here in 1940. Systematic excavations on a larger scale in 1954–55 have, however, revealed the history of this place from the neolithic to the modern times with several breaks. A connected sequence could not be established because of frequent cuttings and disturbances, and ponds. The earliest period is characterised by Neolithic celts, associated with an ill-fired pottery. The second period of occupation could be placed in the 3rd–2nd centuries B.C., with the beautiful and typical terracotta figurines in Sunga style, cast copper coins and pottery bearing close affinity to that in the contemporary northern Indian sites. The North-Black-Polished wares were found in these levels. In the third period, dated c. first-second centuries A.D., the port seems to have shared trade contacts with the external world. It seems that it catered not only for the eastern islands, but merchandise was also carried from here to Ceylon and the west. Roulette ware and sprinkler type vessels—both believed to be originating from Rome—were found in this period, dating to the first two centuries of the Christian era. Evidence of structural activity was also noticed in this period by the exposure of a brick-built deep-stepped

tank and ringed soak-wells.

Occupation during the Kushana and Gupta periods is represented by the fourth period, indicated by a typical terracotta figurine of which only the lower part was found. The graceful modelling and transparent draping are suggestive of its being dated in the Gupta period. Some beautiful terracottas of the third-fourth centuries show the Kushana and Gupta influence. The later history of this site is difficult to reconstruct. The digging of water tanks destroyed the evidence which could be pieced together. Occasional finds of sculptures of the Pala and Sena periods could hardly shed any light on the later history of the site. The topmost deposits could be of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—since these are akin to the brick structures set up by the local elite.

The history of this ancient city, once the capital of Suhma, the port of embarkation for trade and cultural contacts with the external world, lies in obscurity after the early medieval period. It is not certain how it met its end. Flood in the local river might have swept the city of its ancient ruins, but there was no specific trace of it in the excavations. The evidence itself is destroyed and the literary evidence has not much to add regarding its later history.

Taxila

TAXILA, now in Pakistan, 22 miles west of Rawalpindi, was one of the most populous cities of Ancient India. Indian, Graceo-Roman, and Chinese literature—especially the accounts of the two foreign travellers—shed light on its antiquity and historical associations. Its political importance as the capital of the ancient Gandhara Janapada—connected with Pushkalavati in the extreme north-west and Kasi and Magadha in the east, mingled with its academic traditions. To this centre of learning with its teachers of repute, flocked scholars, princes, sons of merchants and even ordinary pupils with a thirst for learning from close and far off quarters. For nearly a thousand years, this city on three successive but ancient sites—Bhir Mound, Sirkap and Sirsikh—representing its ancient, Greek and Kushana phases of political history, ranked high among the cities of Asia. Its civilization represented a remarkable combination of eastern and western elements, noticed in the realm of art and architecture. Here flourished the ancient school of Gandhara art, also called Graeco or Romano-Buddhist art, an attempt in presenting Indian Buddhist subjects, figures of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, divinities drawn from the Buddhist pantheon, Jataka stories and others, carved out by foreign artists out of devotion to the Tathagata.

Probably meaning 'the city of cut-stone' or 'the rock of Taksha', Takshasila, corrupted by the Greek and Roman writers as Taxila, could trace its antiquity to the period of the *Mahabharata* in which it is mentioned in connec-

tion with the great snake sacrifice of king Janmejaya. The Jatakas frequently mention it as a centre of education and learning. The commentaries suggest that in the Buddha's time also, princes and sons of other eminent men received their training at Taxila or Takkasila. Pasendi of Kosala, Mahali, chief of the Lichchhavis, and Bandhula, prince of the Mallas, were classmates; and so also were Jivaka, the famous physician at Rajagaha (Rajgir), Angulimala, and Dhammapala of Avanti. Bimbisara's contemporary in Gandhara was Pukkusati. Very probably, Taxila formed part of the Achaemenid empire about the beginning of the 5th century A.D. The Gandaria (Gandhara) satrapy is mentioned in the list recorded in the inscriptions at Persepolis; and at Naksh-i-Rustam. At the time of the Macedonian invasion, Ambhi, the ruler of this place, surrendered and Alexander seems to have spent a few weeks here. It was then very wealthy, prosperous, and well-governed. Under the Mauryas, Taxila was a provincial seat; and Asoka was sent here as his father's deputy. But soon after his death, it along with other outlying provinces shook off the cloak of Mauryan sovereignty and asserted independence. Sophytes or Saubhuti was ruling here when the city faced the onslaught of the Indo-Greeks of the Seleucid family. Demetrius carried on his arms successfully as far as Northern India. Taxila continued to enjoy its position of importance under Eucratides and his successors, although the capital of their possessions was Sakala or Sialkot. The Scythians, Parthians, and Sakas ruled here in succession.

Sirkap, founded by the Indo-Greeks—was then the political centre, and the remnants of the ancient palace and city area with the gates and fortification wall have been exposed by the archaeologists. The Kushanas founded

another city known as Sirsukh. Apollonius of Tyana probably visited the city of Sirkap in Taxila in the year 44 A.D. The city itself, about the same size as Nineveh, and fortified like the cities of Greece, had a symmetrical plan but with streets narrow and irregular. Inside the city was the temple of the Sun, and a royal palace distinguished by its simplicity from the one at Babylon. Under the Kushanas the royal seat was at Purushpura, but they founded a city at Taxila known as Sirsukh. The place lost its importance after the Kushanas, and the work of destruction attained its full pace under the white Hunas who swept down the country. When Fa-hien visited the place about 400 A.D., he noticed the Buddhist stupas and the monasteries. Huna vandalism destroyed the place and it could never regain its past glory. Nature seems to have spread its earthen shoal over its dead body giving it a quiet burial before excavations by archaeologists in the later part of the nineteenth and the first half of the present century. Locally known as Serain-khala, it was Cunningham who identified the city with ancient Takshasila or Taxila. This is confirmed by finds—inscriptions, coins and structural remains.

The structural remains at Taxila exposed by Marshall during incessant excavations for more than twenty years include the Palace area at Sirkap with its fortifications further excavated in 1944, the Bhirmound area, the Dharmarajika Stupa, Jandial, Giri, Sirsukh, Lalchak and Badalpur, Mohra Moradu, Pippala, Jaulian and the Bhallar Stupa. Different types of masonry have been used in the monuments, representing rather phased structural set-ups. Rubble is used, for example, in the Bhir Mound. Sirkap offers evidence of successive settlements with the oldest parts of the building consisting of rubble

masonry. Among the buildings is a spacious Apsidal Temple of the Buddhists, several small shrines, a number of dwelling houses, and the remains of the palace area in the central part of the city with its High Street and several small ones. Small antiquities found in the area include coins of the Indo-Parthian, Saka and earlier Kadphises Kushana rulers. The shrine of the double-headed eagle is very interesting with the pilasters of the Corinthian order on the front and the niches in the inter-spaces. The stratigraphic relation between the dated structure inside and stone city wall in the southern sector was revealed in the 1944–45 excavations.

Taxila, although one of the most important centres of Gandhara art, was not the place where that art took its root and shape. It was somewhere in the region of Swat —where phyllite and other schist material was easily available—that the school in which foreign artists displayed their talents flourished for the service of Buddhism. This art thrived from about the first century B.C. to about the fourth century A.D. It was under the Kushanas, particularly under Kanishka, noted for his eclecticism and broad outlook, that the art is supposed to have attained its culmination. Foreign artists seem to have influenced a little the workers at the other end of the Kushana empire in Mathura and Sarnath who were following the earlier traditions. Contact between Taxila and Central India could be traced on a political level to the time of Antialkides of the Indo-Greek family who had sent an ambassador named Heliodora to the Indian court at Vidisa.

Taxila, besides being the provincial seat, the meeting ground of men of different nationalities, who contributed to its development and prosperity, a centre of art and

religion, was noted in the ancient world as a centre of learning. It was not a University town, unlike Nalanda with its big campus, lecture halls and residential quarters. References to the students' life in the Jatakas are suggestive of teachers' houses as seats of learning. Pupils from good families boarded with the teacher and paid him a handsome amount for covering their expenses on food and instruction during the entire period of their stay. Poor pupils, however, attended on the teacher and the family. There was no disparity in instruction covering the entire field of Vedic study, grammar, arts (silpas) and even professional subjects like medicine and archery. The Buddhist monasteries in town were also centres of learning.

It is a pity that archaeologists have not found any site which could be the campus of this ancient seat of learning. That only affirms the suggestion that only the hermitage of the teacher was the place of study which could accomodate in individual cases a good number of pupils. Taxila is no longer in India. It was a city of ancient India with its rich academic traditions, its political importance, affluence and prosperity, and above all, a cosmopolitan nature with men of different nationalities living in amity and accord.

Ujjayini

THE capital of king Pradyota of Avanti, Ujjayini—now modern Ujjain—situated on the river Sipra, was something more than a mere metropolis, or even a centre of learning. Associated with astronomy, in fact the Greenwich of Ancient India, from where the meridian of longitude was reckoned, the scene of activity of Kalidasa whose dramas were performed here on the occasion of the spring festival at the Royal court of Ujjayini, this ancient city figuring in the popular legends relating to Vikramaditya may possibly be regarded as one of the greatest centres. The *Dipavamsa* ascribes its foundation to Achchutagami, while according to the *Avantya-khanda* of the *Skanda-Purana*, the place came to be known as Ujjayini. After the destruction of the great demon Tripura by the god Mahadeva, Avanti was the important monarchical kingdom in the sixth century of which the capital was Ujjayini of the northern part, while Mahishmati was that of the southern one. King Pradyota was feared even by the powerful Magadhan rulers, but later on the kingdom of Avanti was annexed to the empire of the Pataliputra rulers. Asoka was acting as a Viceroy at this place in the fourth century B.C. The grammarian Panini and his commentator Patanjali mention Avanti which is compounded with Akara—identified with eastern Malava in the Junagarh inscription of Rudradaman. The *Mahabharata* places the kingdom in western India. The importance of the city of Ujjayini as a commercial link with the ports on the western coast is noted by the author of

the *Periplus* ; and Ptolemy associates it with Chashtana. From Ozene (Ujjain) were brought down to Barygaza for local consumption or export, commodities like onyx-stones, porcelain, fine muslins, etc. The importance of the place had not dwindled under the Guptas. The Saka-Kshatrapas were defeated by Chandragupta II and Ujjayini formed part of the Gupta empire. Vikramaditya of Kalidasa is supposed to be none else than the Gupta ruler Chandragupta second.

Ujjayini was a holy place for the Hindus, while the Buddhists and the Jains also link the country of Avanti with the activities of the Sramana leaders. Under Maha Kacchayana who was born in the city, Budhhism spread far and wide in Avanti. Mahavira, the Jain Tirthankara, is said to have performed some penances in Avanti and its capital where he was vainly dissuaded. It is also associated with the Lingayatas. When the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-tsang visited this place, it was 30 *li* or 5 miles in circuit. The kingdom of Ujjain was under the rule of a Brahmin raja. In the city there were several dozens of monasteries, but at that time only three or four were not in ruins, providing shelter to about 300 monks. The temples of the gods were numerous. The city was populous. In later times the city enjoyed the patronage of the Pratihara rulers, and the Paramaras of Malwa. Munja noted for his learning and eloquence and his nephew Bhoja ruled at Dhara, in those days the capital of Malwa; but Ujjayini enjoyed their patronage. The city remained under this local dynasty followed by the Tomaras and the Chauhanas, finally passing into the hands of the Muslim rulers in 1401 A.D.

The ruins of the ancient city, partially excavated earlier by the State Archaeological Department, received

fuller attention in 1955. The Garh-Kalika mound on the northern outskirts of the present city was tackled. The excavations revealed a continuous occupation of the site from a period, roughly from 750 B.C. to the beginning of the Muslim rule in Malwa, divided into four distinct periods in a deposit ranging from 35–40 feet. Period I dating from the earliest times to about 500 B.C. is characterised by black-and-red, fine, red-slipped, and coarse granulated wares, the last one dominating over the other two classes. A massive rampart with a moat was discovered. It dates back to the earliest period of occupation being associated with a sherd of the Painted Grey Ware type. The rampart encloses an area measuring about one and three quarters of a mile in length, with a basal width of a little over 200 feet, and the maximum extant height of 42 feet. Several openings in the area occupied by the rampart suggest gateways. A thick wall with a gentle slope on the inner side and a less pronounced one on the exterior was set up by the dumping of dug-up yellow and black clays. The moat apparently connected with the river Sipra runs along the southern and eastern side, being surrounded on the north and west by the river itself. Filled with greenish water borne silt, the moat was found to be at least 80 feet wide and 22 feet deep at the time when in use. Evidences of breaches in the rampart and their subsequent repairs were also noticed. The rampart was strengthened over the river-side with a caging of wooden rafters covered by mud. A succession of road was discovered towards the north-west, suggesting the gateway for traffic.

The next period of occupation is characterised by the usual North-Black Polished ware of local manufacture. This period was one of prosperity, as suggested by the objects of

different varieties, several structures in different materials, coins in large numbers, ceramics turned entirely on the wheel. The structures were made variously of mud, mud-bricks, stone rubbles or burnt bricks. A plinth of rubble and clay served as the plinth for the setting up of the structure. The use of lime-bricks with a glazed surface was noticed. The mortar and plaster were of a smooth paste of clay ; flooring on a bed of rubble was made either of clay, or was occasionally mixed with mud-bricks. Large-sized bricks were used in the massive underground structure. Ring-wells traced in this and in the following periods served more as soak-pits. Among the notable structural remains associated with this period may be mentioned a large tank and a canal exposed to a considerable length both being brick-built. A tall-roofed mud house found in a fallen and damaged stage served as a workshop for the manufacture of beads of agate and arrow heads of various shapes and sizes. Here chunks of bone serving as raw material, and several finished pieces of bone arrow-heads and knitting needles together with a few objects of iron were found. Two seals of ivory bearing inscription in early Brahmi script of the third-second century B.C., suggest the upper limit of the chronological range of this period of occupation in a 14 feet thick strata.

The third period is assigned to circa 200 B.C. to 1300 A.D., from the Sungas to the Paramaras, represented by a thick strata of 9 feet of which the sub-strata have not been worked out. The structural remains of this period suggest brick constructions over rubble plinths, the santinary arrangements were provided by terracotta soakage-wells, bottomless soakage jars, and terracotta pipe drains and brick-drains laid under-ground. Coins bearing the usual Ujjayini symbol and terracotta figurines

abound in this period. The figure of a lady with the decorative tunic and other ornamentation of the Kushana period is notable. The pottery of this period was wheel-turned.

The last period represented by a 10 feet thick strata marked the end of the Paramara rule and the beginning of the Muslim one in Malwa. The site seems to have been abandoned after a short-lived occupation in the fourteenth century A.D. Muslim coins, glazed and other typical pottery consisting of a dull-red to red-ware, a few sherds of dull and coarse grey were found. The structural remains were found mostly disturbed and in the form of debris, suggesting the removal of the building material for new constructions. The township was shifted away from the fortified walls which must have proved ineffective.

The importance of Ujjayini with a long history, rather an uninterupted one of about two thousand years, is provided by the literature and the archaeological remains. Renowned as a centre of learning and astronomy, the metropolis or seat of the mighty rulers from Prodyata onwards to the Paramaras, the emporium of trade exporting precious and semi-precious stones to the western world, Ujjayini served the multiple purpose of catering for various interests in the political and economic fields. Its location was well-suited as a link between the north and the south-west, and through it flowed ideas and goods from one part of India to the other.

Vaisali

THE metropolis of the Lichchavis, hallowed by the presence of Mahavira who was born here, and the Buddha who occasionally paid visits to this city staying at the mango-grove of the courtesan Ambapalli, Vaisali, now represented by the village Basarh on the road from Chapra to Muzaffarpur in Bihar, 22 miles from the latter, can still boast of a glorious past. It was founded by the Lichchavis and covered an extensive area, while the *Ramayana* credits Visala, a son of Ikshvaku and the nymph Alambusha, as its founder. The distant towers and pinnacles of the city are noticed in the Epic with reference to the visit of the Kosalan princes to the Videhan capital in the company of their preceptor Visvamitra. An excellent town, charming and fascinating, it was in earlier times ruled by the Ikshvaku princes who were possessed of longevity, virtue and strength. At the time of the Buddha, the city had three walls encompassing it at a short distance from each other with gates and watch-towers located therein. It was a populous and a prosperous town, with numerous gardens and groves crowded by charming and delightful people, and adorned with many-storeyed buildings of varied patterns. Outside the town was a forest, covering a large area known as Mahavana where a Sangharama or monastery was later on set up, known as Kutagarasala. The Lichchhavis of Vaisali—the most important and influential clan of the Vajjian Republic—occupied the capital of the Ikshvaku monarchs of the remote past. Their power and prestige endured for nearly eight hundred

years with changing colours of fortune. Invariably represented as Kshatriyas in ancient Indian literature, they had matrimonial relations with the other Kshatriya powers, and they also claimed a share in the relics of the Buddha after his cremation. The attempt of the Magadhan ruler Ajatasatru to wage a war against his uterine brothers Hala and Vehala, born of a Lichchavi princess, having failed to bring the desired objective, he sent his ministers Sunidha and Vassakara to Vaisali to create dissension in the Vajjian Republic; and they were successful in their intentions. The fame and prosperity of the Lichchhavis waned with the lack of internal unity and the evil designs of the Magadhan rulers. It fell before the Maghadhan attack, and formed part of that empire. The city continued to enjoy political importance under the Guptas. Samudragupta boasts of his Lichhchavi lineage, as his father had married a princess from this family. Excavations carried on at the ancient site of Vaisali, represented by Raja Visala-ka-garh, yielded 700 clay seals which were used for stamping purposes on letters and other official documents. Some were official, while others were used by guilds of merchants and bankers. It is presumed that the specimen bearing the figure of *linga* with a *trisula* and the legend Amratakesvara belonged to a temple. The names of some Gupta kings, queens and princes also figure on some of these seals. Tirakbhukti was the name of the province of which Vaisali was the capital.

When Fa-hien visited this place in the fifth century A.D., he saw to the north of the city a large forest, and within it a double-galleried vihara where Buddha dwelt a thousand years earlier. A tope or stupa was also

built at the spot where the Lord took his last walk. Another tope was built at the place where the disciplinary rules were collated, signifying the second Buddhist Council held at Vaisali. The double-galleried vihara was found in ruins when Hiuen-tsang visited it after more than two hundred years. The city of Vaisali is described by this pilgrim to be about 5000 *li* in circuit, a very fertile region abounding in mangoes, plantains and other fruits. According to the pilgrim, the foundations of the old city of Vaisali were 60 or 70 *li* in circuit and the palace area was 4 or 5 *li* in circuit.

The city seems to have been abandoned when the Chinese pilgrim visited it. There is no record of this place in later history, but the upper levels have yielded traces of Muslim occupation. In this village of Vaisali which has also an un-inscribed Asokan pillar, there are remains of stupas as well as traces of fortifications. After Bloch's excavations, followed by Spooners a decade later, which yielded seals confirming the location of ancient Vaisali at Basarh, those in the fifties brought to light interesting phases of occupation at this site. During a period of a thousand years from c. 500 B.C. to c. 500 A.D., four periods of occupation were noticed, characterised by black-and-red, and red wares, in association with the North-Black Pottery wares. Kiln-burnt bricks were found in the later phase of this period with beads of semi-precious stones and terracotta figurines of nagas. Structural activity of a considerable nature is noticed in the second phase of its occupation with punch-marked coins and votive plaques showing the representation of the mother-goddess. Well-built structures of the third period from roughly 200–300 A.D., were also revealed, followed by the fine Gupta terracottas

and sealings of that period. Bloch's excavations uncovered the phase of Mohammadan occupation. The defence of the ancient city is traced to three periods—the original rampart built with burnt brick in the Sunga period, heightened with earth in the time of the Kushanas with a moat encircling it ; and ultimately brick was used again in the Gupta period with structural additions. Coins, seals and sealings, terracotta figurines besides other ornamental objects, were found in excavations. A relic casket was found inside the core of a stupa, which was supposed to have been set over the ashes of the Buddha.

Vaisali seems to have attracted the attention of the people of North Bihar in general, and of those of Muzaffarpur district in particular, who have strained hard to revive its ancient glory by uncovering its buried past. This ancient site of Raja Visala, the proud possession of the Lichchavi princes, a centre of pilgrimage for the Buddhists and the Jains alike, the metropolis of the Vajjis, is no longer desolate and deserted. The setting up of a local museum would relate the tale of its history, exhibited through the objects recovered from the excavations.

Vidisa

THE capital of Agnimitra and that of eastern Malwa, Vidisa, immortalised by Kalidasa in his *Meghaduta*, was famous in northern India for its ivory workers. It is represented at present by Besnagar—a ruined city situated on the Betwa (Vetravati). According to the Puranas, Vaidisa—the Sanskrit name of Vidisa—was situated on the bank of the river Vidisa emerging from the Paripatra mountains. A large number of inscriptions notice this place, and its antiquity can be traced to much earlier times. According to the *Mahavamsa*, it was fifty yojanas from Pataliputra, and was founded by the Sakyans who fled from Vidudabha's massacre. The place was also the home of Devi, the mother of Mahendra, and he stayed at the Vedisagiri monastery for a month before proceeding to Ceylon. In the sixth century B.C., the city seems to have been included in the kingdom of Avanti, since its separate political identity is not noticed. It was on the route from Pataliputra to Ujjayini. During the Mauryan period, too, there is reference to it as the capital of the western part in the context of Asoka and the Vidisa mahadevi. But the city's political importance shot up with the Sungas. It represented the capital of Agnimitra who is the hero of the *Malavikagnimitran* of Kalidasa. It is quite likely that the viceroyalty at Vidisa might have been the legacy of the Mauryan rule. Kalidasa notices this city in his drama mentioned above, as the scene of romance between the ruler of this place, Agnimitra and the Vaidarbhi

princess Malavika who was living in disguise in his court. According to the *Meghaduta*, Vidisa was the capital of the Dasarna country, which figures in the *Mahavastu* as one of the sixteen janapadas of Jambudvipa. While describing the route of the cloud messenger, the poet notices the country of Dasarna in which direction lay the well-known capital city of Vidisa on the Vetravati. The people of this place are noted in the *Mahabharata* as allies of the Pandavas. They were known after the river Dasarna—the modern Dhasan which joins the Betwa—ancient Vetravati. According to the *Markandeya Purana,* the river gave its name to the country through which it flowed. The Dasarna country of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* seems to be different from the one of the *Meghaduta*. There might have been two—the western one representing eastern Malwa and Bhopal, and the eastern one forming a part of the Chhattisgarh district in the present Madhya Pradesh.

The importance of Vidisa, the chief city of Dasarna, was due to its central position connecting the sea-ports of western India with Pataliputra, and Pratishthana or Paithan with Sravasti. It was a halting place on the route to the Dakshinapatha. The city was noted for its ivory workers. The *Periplus* mentions Dasarna as famous for ivory, and it specialised in sharp-edged swords as well. A Sanchi record refers to the carving done by the Vidisa workers in ivory known as *dantakaras*. Many other inscriptions record donations of pious men and women, devotees and monks and nuns at Sanchi and at Bharhut. That sheds light on the religious character of the people of this place. Donors from this place contributed towards the setting

up of Buddhist edifices. Champadevi, the wife of Revatimitra, Vasishthi, the wife of Venimitra, Aryama, Phagudeva and Bhutarakshita represent some of the pious women and men who contributed liberally in setting up Buddhist endowments. The Vidisagiri Mahavihara was the first Buddhist vihara, while the stupas at Sanchi, less than 6 miles from this place, were within the campus of the greater city of Vidisa. It was also a centre of Vaisnavism. The famous Besnagar column record narrates its erection, surmounted by Garuda, in honour of Krishna-Vasudeva by the Greek ambassador Heliodoros, son of Dion, who was a resident of Taxila, and was sent by the Indo-Greek ruler to his contemporary Kasiputra Bhagabhadra reigning at Vidisa. The Greek ambassador is called Bhagavata—a devotee of Vishnu. This is confirmed by the teachings in two lines engraved on the other side of the column. At a distance of a mile and a half lies the famous Udaya-giri cave with the boar incarnation of Vishnu carved out in one of the caves. It also bears an inscription of Sanakanika who was the feudatory of Chandragupta Vikramaditya. Excavations were carried on a minor scale at this ancient site near the Besnagar pillar in 1914–15. A stone-column standing near a large mound, a little to the north-east of the main site with a branch of the river Betwa separating it, is noted for its monolithic character and varying sides—octagonal at the base, sixteen in the middle and thirty-two at the top. The bell-shaped capital with a massive abacus surmounting it and crowned by a palm-leaf ornament of strange design are noteworthy.

The city formed part of the Gupta empire and seems to have enjoyed the status of importance even though it

might not have been the metropolis for the western part of their empire after the defeat of the Sakas. The Huna conquest of Malwa in the first quarter of the sixth century A.D. seems to have given a blow to this city. Punch-marked coins from excavations suggest the use of the copper currency for a period of about six hundred years till the fourth century A.D. The end of the city is an uncertain event.

Although not a very important city like Ujjayini in Central India, Vidisa seems to have attracted the attention of the poet Kalidasa who refers to it in his three works. It was the provincial seat of the Sungas, and Agnimitra was ruling here. The place was visited by the Greek ambassador because of its religious sanctity rather than for political reasons. Earlier excavations could reveal only the free standing monolithic column, and the famous sculptures in the Udaigiri caves which are a class by themselves. The city has regained its old name Vidisa. Its political importance at present is none, but it continues to be a tourist centre because of its proximity to Sanchi and nearness to the Udaigiri caves.

Vikramasila

Vikramasila has no pretension of being an ancient city of importance, a metropolis, or a centre of trade. Its location itself has been a matter of speculation, although it ranked next to Nalanda as a centre of learning with its teachers noted for their scholarship. Situated in Bihar, the keel of this University was laid by king Dharampala of the Pala dynasty in the latter part of the eighth century A.D., and it flourished for well over four hundred years, when it was completely destroyed by the Mohammadan invaders. At one time, it was presumed that Silao near Nalanda was a contraction of Vikramasila. Excavations have recently been carried out at a place called Antichak, 13 kilometres north of Colong railway station in the Bhagalpur district. The village and its neighbourhood have very extensive mounds covering an area of not less than 10 square kilometres. Other identifications proposed are Pathargarh hill in the Bhagalpur district or Keur near Hulsaganj. In the absence of any definite piece of information which could settle the question of the location of this ancient site, detailed information regarding this seat of learning and its wide campus etc. is not available. It is only by piecing together the evidence from different sources that it might be possible to give some idea of this academic centre which had no less than 8000 pupils and about two hundred professors, thus constituting a big colony, no less important nor smaller in size than a fairly good city of ancient India. The information is available from the Tibetan accounts, and the

biographies of scholars from this university who had gone to Tibet, while its fall and fury displayed by Bakhtiar Khilji are well described in the *Tabakat-i-Nasari.*

The Palas, as patrons of learning, had generously endowed this centre with grants making provision for the maintenance of more than 108 University Professors who resided in the campus and a large number of non-resident ones. There was a large vihara in that area. In the centre was a big Buddhist temple surrounded by 108 smaller ones. Entrance to the university was regulated. The six gates had each a scholar of eminent fame who guarded it. Although a centre of Buddhist and Tantric learning, Vikramasila had provision for instructions in Metaphysics, Logic, Rituals and other subjects. The founder-chancellor of the University in the time of Dharmapala was Acharya Buddha Janapada. Other distinguished figures of the university were Dipankara Asita, and Sthavira Ratnakara. The former was specially invited to Tibet. The monk who had come there to extend him the Royal invitation found in the assembly of Bhikshus 8000 monks, and he stayed there for three years from A.D. 1035–38. The old Chancellor was ultimately persuaded to visit the land of the snow. This particular scholar, whose reputation had extended far and wide, had also been to Suvarnadvipa and Ceylon. Asita was the founder of Lamaism in Tibet. The names of several other scholars besides Asita who had gone to Tibet include Kamalakulisa, Narendra-srijnana, Danarakshita and a few others. When the centre was destroyed in 1203, and most of its residents were killed, Sri Pandita, the Chancellor at that time, retired to the University of Jagadala from where he subsequently went along with

many monks to Tibet.

Vikramasila, the academic city of ancient India, has hardly left any trace for its correct location, the site being so systematically destroyed. Mounds, no doubt, reveal the antiquity of the place with which the ancient city is supposed to be identified. Excavations at Antichak yielded a terracotta votive stupa bearing an inscription—*Sri Dharmadhara Devasya*—in the late Pala script. Three structural phases were revealed. A black stone image of the Buddha in the *Bhumisparshamudra*—touching the earth posture—was also found. The evidence is in no way conclusive in fixing the location of the ancient site of Vikramasila.

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* *Ancient India No. 4* is a joint work of R. E. M. Wheeler, A. Ghosh and Krishnadeva.

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